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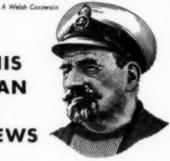
CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY CROSSWORD No. 21 (April)

SOLUTION

Across: 8, Highbrow; 9, Export; 10, Yes man; 11, Half cock; 12, Stripe; 13, Limerick; 15, Twig; 17, Chinese; 19, Odyssey; 22, Awry; 24, Semolina; 27, Sables; 29, Studious; 30, Notary; 31, Oppose; 32, Irrigate.

Down: 1, Divest; 2, Champion; 3, Trinkets; 4, Swahili; 5, Peplum; 6, Spicer; 7, Tricycle; 14, Igor; 16, Wean; 18, Heeltaps; 20, Dysentry; 21, Sabotage; 23, Wassail; 25, Old boy; 26, Ironed; 28, Errata.





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Contents—May 1956

			*					PAGE
WAR IN THE CHAZZAMETTI	Ε.						. Clive Burnley	257
THE FAIR INTELLECTUAL C	LUB						. W. M. Parker	264
THE IRON LUNG							. E. H. Treweeks	267
HIKER'S PILL (Poem)							. K. C. Bruce	268
SUNDAY MORNING.							Donald Diespecker	269
'U', 'A', 'X', OR —?: Film Censorship in Britain								271
LAST THRUSH (Poem)							Marjorie Stannard	274
CHOOSING THE OFFICERS								275
JOXER							. S. P. Sharpe	279
DEW-NATURE'S WONDER						,	. E. Griffiths	282
CORPUS CHRISTI (Poem) .							Anne Philip Smith	284
IRONFIELD RECLAMATION							. Cyril Wilkinson	285
WHO IS MY ENEMY?							Philip de Carteret	287
ANGEL OF DOOM: The Great Amaxosa Delusion . F. Addington Symonds								291
IN THE HEAVENLY MOUNTAINS:								
A Visit to the Kalmuks of the					4	. Co	lonel P. T. Etherton	293
SPRING SONG (Poem)							B, R. Gibbs	297
A BRAHMAN'S HONOUR.							. A. G. P. Pullan	298
PROGRESS (Poem)							. Charles Kellie	302
WOOD-DESTROYERS							. Jean Dallas Cope	303
ROAD-SAFETY IN THE UNIT							. Joseph Barrett	305
SAYONARA SHIMOTSUI (Poe							. Tom Wright	306
BUYER'S MARKET							. Frank Driscoll	307
SOMETHING IS KNOWN: Th	e Pris	oner's	Past	in Tri	ials		. Charles Burbank	309
TWICE-TOLD TALES: LXV.—		- AU	160					312
RIOT ACT							Gerard Bell	313
A PHILOSOPHY (Poem) .			*			Dap	hne Morley-Fletcher	316
SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE-								
without Drips. Better Safety-	Razo	r Blad	es.	Bindin	g Boo	ks at l	Home. New Range	
of Boilers. Motorists' Glove								317
WEEDS						- 11	. E. Shewell-Cooper	320
Illustrations by Ridgway.								

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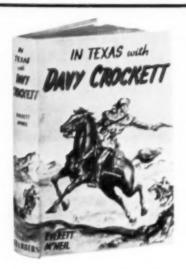
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War in the Chazzamette

CLIVE BURNLEY

THE Holding-Bullworth feud lasted three years in the Chazzamette valley and is reputed to have cost the lives of twenty-four people.

This was in the days when Ned Buntline was founding the great Western myth which was to make the Navy Colt as much a faery

weapon as Excalibur.

The man who stopped the Holding-Bullworth feud single-handed deserved to be as famous as any frontier marshal of history. But not many people have heard of Holy Smoke Joe Chestnut. He didn't quite square with the American tradition of virility and violence. He was a dapper freckle-speckled little man with thin blond hair standing up around his prematurely-furrowed brow like a halo; I suppose that's how he got his name. He was the sort of man who not merely refrained from swatting flies, but would actually rescue them from water-butts. I suppose he was just too little a man all round to fit the mould of simple pioneer hero.

But they were desperate men that day in the

back big-stake room of Gahagan's Eureka Saloon in Bilbo City. Otherwise they would never have given him the job.

They sat chunkily in bamboo-chairs eating the inner ends of cigars and expectorating deftly into polished brass cuspidors—Senator Peffler, old Morgan, cow-king Craverdyce, the Wells-Fargo man, the railroad man, the Cassidy County peace officer, the editor of the Bilbo New Trumpet. The only item on the agenda was what the hell to do about the Chazzamette.

They had reasons for asking. These men held land worth money or interests worth more in that rolling valley where the Yavahapi Creek ran down to the Silversand. Neither was much use to them while you couldn't hire hands to haul or ride there at less than four times the customary rates. Even if you did hire them, what happened?

'If they don't get shot down on sight as strangers,' said Senator Peffler, his spike beard wagging at every vowel, 'they get drawed into the war in the end. The Chazzamette's full of

fine widows. It's part of the code never to kill women. So a man with any spark at all in him gets roped and drawed in by some god-darned relict, and he's no damn good after—if he ain't shot full o' holes he's too busy figuring how to do it to other people to mind his own affairs, let alone anybody else's.'

'We want a man,' said Craverdyce. 'One o' those fire-breathing, blastaway marshals. Take five hundred dollars and buy a Man! Buy the Earps! Anybody know where the

Earps are?"

'Last I heard they was pretty busy down in Tombstone,' said Holy Smoke Joe Chestnut (Who let him in?), pouring down his throat a quarter-pint of Mountain Dew. 'But you're talking business at last. Five hundred bucks! I'd clean up the Chazzamette myself for five-fifty.'

'You?' said Peffler. 'Like hell you would!'

'It might be like that,' agreed Holy Smoke, 'but I'd do it. It jest came to me a couple of seconds ago how I could do it. Give me the fifty to kit out, give me your word as gentlemen I collect the five hundred when the job's done, and give me a month. After that, the Chazzamette's yours. Senator, I'll guarantee you'll be able to ride up the Silversand naked on a black mare and never have a hair pulled from her tail.'

They were desperate men, and before the hour was out Holy Smoke was on his way.

HREE days later this fearless adventurer entered the Chazzamette in broad daylight and a cloud of dust. He came rattling up the sandy trail beside the Silversand in a rickety buckboard hauled by a skewbald horse. He had no guns at his belt-indeed he had no belt-for either would have looked odd above the light-blue dress he wore with its lace cuffs and collar and the accordion-pleated skirt. He had no shadows on his jowl, being of a fair complexion and very meticulously shaven, and with the help of a little hair that was not his own under his bonnet he made a very plausible, if rather hard-faced, womanone of the sex that was sacred in the pioneer wars of the primitive West.

No doubt that was just as well. As he came abreast of Spanish Gulch he found three mounted men with dark and scrub-whiskered faces blocking his further progress. The foremost, the man with the large nose and tiny

eyes, was none other than Ezra Holding, leader of that clan, in person, swathed in belts of ammunition, with two six-guns belted high on his waist, a rifle hanging by his right stirrup, a shotgun by his left, and a bowie-knife against his hip. 'Now then, ma,' said he, 'just where azzactly are you off to?'

Holy Smoke Joe Chestnut was for the moment a Mrs Honoria Clumshaw—the name of his married sister in Ohio—and it will be convenient to refer to him by that name so long as he continued to fill the role. Mrs Clumshaw, then, made appropriate answer in a suitably thin voice—where she was going

was her business.

Ezra Holding agreed, but said it was his, too; everything and everybody in the Chazzamette was his business. Mrs Clumshaw could either tell him what she was doing in the Chazzamette, when it was just possible he would permit her to continue doing it, or he would have her courteously but firmly kicked out of it. He was czar and pope and emperor in these parts, he explained, and as a general rule he didn't care for strangers.

Mrs Clumshaw appealed to his better nature. She appealed to Providence, to the Declaration of Rights, the Laws of the Republic, and the Ten Commandments, without getting any help from any of them. So in the end she told her story, or at least it was prised out of her by a barrage of questions as

soon as her resolution weakened.

IT appeared that Mrs Clumshaw was the widow of one Jacob Clumshaw who had died of sheer joy in Bilbo City a week after striking it exceedingly rich on the headwaters of the Yavahapi—gold in hundredweights. Before succumbing to an overload of Tarantula Juice, however, Jacob had shared his secret with the wife of his bosom, and she was now out to locate and claim her inheritance.

'Well now,' said Ezra, 'I'm always ready to help a lady. My boys'll take you right where you want to go if you tell me where—this ain't the sort of place for a lady to ride round

unescorted.3

Mrs Clumshaw said she would take her chance of that and said that the only place she wished to be taken to at the moment was somewhere where they had a bed.

'We got beds too,' said Ezra rather proudly. It was as easy as that. Holy Smoke Joe Chestnut had every reason to be proud of

WAR IN THE CHAZZAMETTE

himself. He had barely stuck his nose into the Chazzamette and here he was being escorted with every sign of respect by the terrible Holdings themselves to that focal point in the valley war, the Holding homestead. They reached it within two hours, or at least Mrs Clumshaw did; her escort melted away into the scrub some time before she reached it. The fact was that the most dangerous place for male Holdings was the Holding home: it was the same with the Bullworths and most other families living in the valley. After the first year of sieges and assassinations the men turned guerillas and spent the better part of their time living like Indians in the woods and canyons. Only the women stayed at home. Those at the Holding house had been warned by some bush-telegraph of their visitor's approach and welcomed her without surprise.

There were three of them—Aunt Alice, Ezra's wife, vulture-faced, shrill, active; Sally Mabel, her daughter, a servant by nature and usage, scarred and creased by chores; and Amabel, who was somebody's niece. Amabel was a soft-fleshed unmistakable girl, upon whom any eye could linger; but the two hags she outshone regarded her only with pity.

'She was bred up East,' explained Aunt Alice. 'Got sappy with schoolin'. Needs stiffenin' up, but I dessay she'll grow out of it after she's been in the Chazzamette a while longer. Already she ain't such a scaredy cat as she use to act.'

UNT ALICE, at least, saw things in their A proper perspective. To her the Holding homestead was a museum dedicated to the enduring memory of that holiest of noble crusades, the Holding-Bullworth feud. She insisted that Mrs Clumshaw should see all the exhibits-the chair Cousin Luke was shot in, with the fatal bullet-hole still visible; the wall peppered by the buckshot that missed Ezraall but his left thumb; the places where they buried Tom and Alexander; the barn that took fire the night of the second siege: the tree they hanged Roger Bullworth from. All these things Mrs Clumshaw beheld with such a proper respect that Aunt Alice thought her a very well-brought-up woman, such as might have a beneficial moral influence upon the unstable Amabel.

When the time came, therefore, to seek the Holding beds—and they were indeed real beds, although they only had grass mattresses

—Aunt Alice proposed, and then insisted, that Mrs Clumshaw should share the little square room occupied by Amabel. By some quite untypical lapse, Holy Smoke had never foreseen a contingency of this sort and came so near to betraying himself in his discomfiture that he was finally forced to assent with apparent grace to the arrangement to prevent suspicion.

Amabel thought it queer, and even repellent according to her degenerate Eastern ideas, that her companion should insist upon sleeping in her clothes on the floor. But it was not until the first ashy light of dawn that revelation came to her; it was something in Mrs Clumshaw's posture and perhaps, too, the faint blond fuzz now visible upon her cheeks. Holy Smoke stirred from an uneasy doze and saw, directly aimed at the bridge of his nose, a small dark orifice which was the delivery end of a three-eight Smith and Wesson revolver. 'You're a man!' whispered Amabel. She whispered not from any desire to keep the secret, but because shock and fear had robbed her of her voice, although her hand on the revolver-butt was steady. 'You're a man!'

Holy Smoke did not attempt to deny it, not being certain how far Amabel had taken her proof. He merely said, in the most urgent tones: 'Hush!'

'You're a Bullworth spy,' said Amabel.
'Uncle Ezra'll kill you!'

'I am not a Bullworth spy. I--'

'You are too,' said Amabel. 'Who else would you be, creeping in here in those duds? You're just another of them murderin' feudin' brutes! I'd kill you meself,' said Amabel, 'only I reckon it'd make me sick.'

'Makes you sick, does it?' said Holy Smoke. 'Why, it makes me sick, too—the whole darn business. I ain't no Bullworth, nor a Holding either. I came out here to stop the Chazzamette war and I'm the only man as can do it. If Uncle Ezra blows the top of my head off—and I know it don't make him sick—he might just as well do as much for himself while he's about it, because one of these shiny nights he'll have his backbone cracked by a fortyfive, if this feud goes on another month. And I could stop it! Did you hear? I said I could stop it.'

'You're lying to save your neck,' said the girl. 'Nobody could stop it.'

'I give you my word as a gentleman,' said Holy Smoke, 'or as a lady, whichever you prefer, that I can and I will. Look—I don't

have a gun or as much as a toothpick. See for yourself. I don't—'

'Aunt Alice is right,' sighed Amabel. 'I just don't have the sand. I know it's silly, but I just don't like killing folk. Only you get out of here, mister, just as soon as you've eaten and saddled up. I don't care to have tramps

camp in my bedroom.'

'Sure, sure,' said Holy Smoke, 'I'll be on my way, pronto pronto. Now just keep a foot against that door, will you, while I pull this beard off,' he added, taking from the folds of his dress a razor that was certainly more lethal than the toothpick he had mentioned, though less so than the derringer he carried in a secret pocket in his bustle. 'I'll put twenty miles between us by noontide,' he said, 'I promise you.'

ND Holy Smoke did try. As soon as he met the other Holding ladies he announced his intention of immediately continuing his journey. Aunt Alice said she was so sorry to cause Mrs Clumshaw any inconvenience but the fact was that the skewbald horse had strayed and Mrs Clumshaw would have to wait until the boys brought it in. A little later Mrs Clumshaw saw the animal in question through a window. Clearly it had been found and there was now nothing to prevent her setting out at once. Aunt Alice again said she was sorry. She had just heard that the creeks were out and that the trails were impassable. Mrs Clumshaw thought this one over for a while and then boldly declared that it wasn't the season for the creeks to be out and that she would risk it. whether they were or not. At this stage Aunt Alice appeared to become sweetly reasonable and went out to prepare Mrs Clumshaw's equipage, returning shortly, however, to say that one of the buckboard's axles was split and couldn't be repaired until Cousin Ebner got back-at the moment Ebner and two of the boys had gone over to shoot up Murphy's Store and might be some time.

Spurred on by scornful glances from Amabel, Mrs Clumshaw finally declared she would go on without the buckboard and would ride the skewbald bareback if need be. Aunt Alice pointed out that the Bullworths would certainly kill her as soon as she was outside the shelter of the Holding house. Mrs Clumshaw knew better. These feuding frontiersmen never shot women—they had a law against it.

At this point Aunt Alice's patience showed signs of exhaustion. She sighed, took up a shotgun that chanced to be standing in a corner. 'I guess you're half-right,' she said. 'Men around these parts don't shoot women. It's against the code. But there's no law against women shooting women.' She polished the butt of the shotgun tenderly. 'I'd be real glad if you stayed awhile with us—for your own good.'

'Well, now, ain't that nice?' said Mrs

Clumshaw. 'Such hospitality!'

So it happened that when Amabel took her candle to her little square room that night Mrs Clumshaw was again at her heels.

'I did my darnedest,' said Holy Smoke, when the door was closed.

Amabel was worried. 'What's Aunt Alice up to? D'you reckon she's on to you?'

'Not in that way,' said Holy Smoke. 'If she had've, I'd be lying in the little Boot Hill you've got in your backyard. It's not that.'

'What is it, then?'

'A lot of large men back in Bilbo gave me this job,' explained Holy Smoke. 'Five hundred dollars to clean up the Chazzamette! The only way they could think of was to send in some ripshooting marshal who'd blow every Bullworth and Holding in the valley into kingdom come. Well now, I reckon there's been more than too much of that kind of thing in these parts already.'

'There has so. Sure, there has so.'

'Now a good feud goes deep in the veins of the sort of folk you get out here,' went on Holy Smoke. 'They was brought up from kids to think it a mighty fine thing not to be afraid of. It goes deep. There's only one other thing that goes anywhere near as deep—and that's gold.'

'Gold?'

'Ever since forty-nine they was raised to believe in that, too. The day they'd find a shine in the creek or stub their toes on nuggets. The big lucky strike. It was all kinds of fairy-land to them—the day they'd be in bonanza. And it came to me all of a sudden that the only way to stop'em hankering for blood was to set'em scrabbling for gold.'

'But how-'

'It don't take much,' said Holy Smoke.
'There are fake rushes all the time. 'A few likely rumours—that's enough. I had one or two friends in Bilbo and Corriapolis spread it

round to bring in the old-timers from outside and I came down here to whip up the local enthusiasm. I let it slip to some of your relatives that I was the widow of the man who found something bigger than the Comstock out on the Yavahapi and that I'd come back to keep it in the family.'

'But that wouldn't be enough. It-'

'It would too,' said Holy Smoke, 'if I could only get out of this jail and spread it a bit wider. Look at Aunt Alice. It's made her forget about having a Bullworth for breakfast, at least one day. All she's worried about is keeping me here until I come across with the full sailing directions. If I could get the word around to all those bored-to-death, bored-tomurder cowhands and sheeprunners lying out in the scrub waiting to blast holes in each other the Chazzamette war would be over. Give it time and the valley'll be so darn thick with gold-grubbers there won't be enough Bullworths or Holdings to count, and there'll be Miners' Safety Committees and Vigilantes and U.S. Marshals and no room left for a feud. But I've got to get out and spread it,' he finished.

'Another thing,' he went on after a moment.
'I make as fine a woman as the next man in a dim light at twenty paces. But I didn't reckon on having to play the part locked up with two of the genuine articles. They'll find me out, Amabel, like you did, sooner or later. It's a dead-sure certainty. When they do, I'm as good as pork. I've got to get out of here.'

'Don't see how,' said Amabel. 'Tisn't only Aunt Alice. This place is guarded like the national armoury. There's a ring of patrols and sentries out in the woods and passwords and what all. You'd never get through.'

'But I've got to. Amabel, you've got to help me.'

'Have 1?' she said, and pondered. 'You'd better get fever,' she said at last. 'Get the blue fever. Then you can lie abed here and they'll never come near you for fear of it. It'll put them off their guard, too. Meantime I can be nurse and keep my eyes open, and then one dark night when they're cooking up a new murder we can run for it.'

"We?"

'I'm sick of the Chazzamette fit to vomit,' said the girl firmly. 'I come from civilisation and I want to get back to it. You stop the war if you like—I just want to get out of it.'

'It's all right with me,' agreed Holy Smoke.
'Just what like is this blue fever?'

'You sweat,' said Amabel. 'You come out in bluish spots and as a general rule they bury you inside a fortnight.'

'You may be right, at that,' said Holy

Smoke.

O Holy Smoke took the blue fever, which I was the most dreaded scourge in Cassidy County, although very little heard of elsewhere. It wasn't altogether as smooth an illness as Amabel had predicted. Sally Mabel was the first stumbling-block. Her Western hospitality didn't extend to the blue fever and she was vehemently in favour of turning out Mrs Clumshaw, who might even, she pointed out, bring death to all the Bullworths, if carefully guided in their direction. Aunt Alice was rather attracted by this possibility of germ warfare, but first wanted to discover exactly where the lost gold of the Yavahapi could be found. She therefore instructed Amabel to extract all possible information from her patient, either by kindness or back-handed blows across the face, whichever seemed best, and to pass it on through the keyhole of the parlour door, for fear of infection. Aunt Alice pretended that Amabel's youth would save her from the worst effects of the disease. In the meantime food would be left outside the plague room at regular intervals.

Mrs Clumshaw's fever was unusually protracted. On the Tuesday Amabel reported that she was very low and densely spotted; by Friday she had rallied a little; on Monday she was delirious; a week later it was plain she could barely last the night; but after twentyone days in bed she was sitting up eating pie.

Other dangers, unknown to Aunt Alice, had also threatened the health of Mrs Clumshaw.

There was the time that Doc Buchanan, the P.M.O. of the Holding forces, had insisted on seeing the patient, and did, in fact, see her, in a blurred sort of way. His infallible method of protecting himself against infection was to fill himself so full of liquor that any microbe rash enough to enter his bloodstream would die of alcoholic poisoning. He reported to Aunt Alice that it was the bluest case of blue fever he had ever seen and that collapse would occur at any moment—he was right, too, for he pitched at her feet immediately afterwards and lay exactly where he fell for six hours without stirring.

There was also the time when a lovelorn Holding cousin tried to show his devotion to

Amabel by braving the plague to see her, and burst into the sickroom at a moment when the grievously sick lady was trying to ease the bed-cramp out of her limbs by doing press-ups on the floor. However, Mrs Clumshaw grasped the situation rather more quickly than he did and proceeded to throw such a convincing fit that she terrified him bloodless. He went out even more quickly than he had come in and was for ever afterwards a sickly youth.

There was also the night when Amabel thought the coast was clear, the night when they let themselves down from the window soon after midnight and within ten minutes had all the Holding outposts blazing away at each other under the impression that the Bullworths were making a night attack. By a miracle the fugitives regained their room without losing their lives or their secret. The only casualty that night was Ezra's sixth son Jacob, who was ever afterwards called One-Lug Jake.

SOME ten days or so later Holy Smoke became desperate. Late one night he went to the square deal box which was his only luggage and discarded Mrs Clumshaw and all her accessories. When Amabel came back into the room he was breeched and booted and carried a couple of Colts she had found for him—they left small-arms lying around in that house so that they would always be handy. 'Looks like it's got to be the Wild Bill Hickok line after all,' Holy Smoke said. 'Here goes, anyway!'

'You don't leave me to talk my way out of it,' said Amabel. 'I'm coming too.'

So they went. They slid out of the window and took the only animal they could find, which was the skewbald, grown fat and lazy, and ambled off along no trail two up in the lightening darkness. They were clumsy-kicked against cans and woodpiles, crunched through pea-shingle in unseen creeks, snapped dead wood under hoof, even sneezed. They itched all over from the constant expectation of a sharp short pain in the torso and blood in their boots. But for some astonishing reason, they blundered on mile after mile, unmolested, until a little after dawn they hit the main trail beside the Silversand at Two Bit Bend.

Here the reason for their immunity suggested itself. The trail was under a fog of sandy dust kicked up by a stream of one-way traffic; the rush had plainly begun. Single riders, groups, buggies, tilt-wagons, buck-

boards; whiskered mountain men lolling in their saddles and pallid city clerks jogging uneasily in theirs; vans carrying families, vans carrying girls in satins, tramps afoot—they came, barely at any time leaving a hundred foot of road empty, heading out toward the Yavahapi.

'Sheep!' said Holy Smoke exultingly after a few miles of this sort of thing. 'By Jo, ain't I a leader of men? A few well-chosen words thrown into the wind and I have half the population treading on each other's heels to get inside the Chazzamette! We're safe, Amabel; the Chazzamette's safe—I've done it!'

She looked at him with something like pride.

A COUPLE of miles past Brannigan's Gulch a suavely-clad bunch came past, conspicuous among them a thin man with a goatee beard and large cigar.

'Senator!' cried Holy Smoke.

'Why, Chestnut!' said Senator Peffler. 'So you came out alive, eh?'

'You bet,' said Joe, cheery and confident.
'And the war's over, ain't it?'

'Sure is,' agreed Peffler. 'Trod out, I reckon. The Bullworths never knew there were as many people in the world as they've seen in the last fortnight. They used to reckon they could shoot the lot, but now I guess they figure it might be too expensive in ammunition.'

'I said I'd stop it,' said Holy Smoke proudly, 'and I did. Just like I said I would.'

'You?' said the Senator testily. 'What had you got to do with it? We pay you fifty dollars and then we don't see hide or hair of you for a month. You didn't stop the Chazzamette war; you ain't the fellow that put the gold in the Yavahapi.'

'But I am that very identical person,' said Holy Smoke. 'That's just exactly what I did do. I figured the only way to get rid of the blood lust in these parts was to spread the gold fever. So I came out here and spread it. Ask this lady—she knows. Ask the Holdings. I passed the word round the Chazzamette at the risk of my life, and a few pals blew it all over Bilbo City and Corriapolis a little easier. Come now, a bargain's a bargain. When do I collect?'

'You mean to tell me-'

'Senator, take it from me there's not enough gold on the Yavahapi to fill a hollow tooth.

WAR IN THE CHAZZAMETTE

It's not the first fake rush by a few score, but I reckon it's the best. It'll burn up a few of these suckers now, but it's stopped the Chazzamette war, and that was the assignment you handed me. I started it, I tell you; I can bring witnesses. I've earned my pay and I want it, fair and honest.'

'Now that's cool,' said the Senator, 'damned if it isn't. You're a smart young fellow, Holy Smoke; you always was. But you've got hold of the wrong man this time; I'm too downy a bird for that sort of line.'

'But listen here-'

'No, no, no,' said the Senator. 'It's smart, Joe, but it won't do. You see, this isn't a fake rush, son. Old Ezra Holding's been getting twenty ounces a pan out on the Yavahapi, and I know, because I was in the Cassidy County bank when he weighed in what looked like half-a-hundredweight of the stuff. The old fool's having a grand-piano shipped out. Rod Bullworth's a millionaire, they say, already. If the feud ever breaks out again, they'll fire gold bullets. But who wants to waste time killing people with all that money to spend? It's coming into Bilbo in wagon-loads, and when they do strike the big lode it's going to make the Comstock look like a silver toothpick. Inside a month Silversand City'll be bigger than Denver. No, Joe, you don't collect this time. Maybe we ought to pay the fellow who put the gold in the Yavahapi, but I reckon money's no object with Him.' Senator Peffler waved airily, tipped his hat to Amabel, and rode on.

A FEW casual inquiries from the passing throng soon confirmed what Senator Peffler had said. Holy Smoke was sweating with rage. 'It's there!' he cried. 'Red gold! It's really there! Darn it, it's my gold. I was the first to say it was there. I knew it was there when the Chazzamette was nothing but scrub and hot bullets. I told Ezra it was there. He's buying grand-pianos with my gold. Ain't there any justice in the world? It's mine—twenty ounces to the pan they're getting—and it's mine!'

He swung the skewbald round facing west. 'I'll get my hands in this,' he said. 'I can be a millionaire in a week just as well as the whisky-pickled bushwhackers they breed in these parts. What's mine is mine and they won't make a fool out of Joe Chestnut whatever they might do with Mrs Clumshaw. You'll see.'

'I won't, though,' said Amabel with determination, slipping neatly off the horse that had carried them both. 'Now I've broke with the West, I've broke with it. The Chazzamette war was enough, and I don't aim to follow it up with a rip-roaring mining-camp. You can have it, honky-tonks and all; and you can get your gold and keep it if you can, and you can finish up on Boot Hill. Me, I'm heading for civilisation.'

'But-'

'I'm going back to those dear little New England places where blowing a man's head off makes everybody sick, not just me. I'm going back if I have to walk every yard. I guess some kind-hearted kid'll advance me the cost of a railroad ticket, though. Good-bye now!'

But she hadn't gone twenty yards before Holy Smoke had thought it out. There might be gold in the Yavahapi—but he was certain sure there was gold right there walking away from him down the dusty trail...

He turned and caught up with her. 'Climb up now,' he said, 'I guess you're right.' And the skewbald horse plodded on double-loaded

again, eastward.

Two things only remain to be added to this story. Firstly, the Chestnuts became one of the most respected families in the retail hardware business in Massachusetts. Secondly, Mrs Honoria Clumshaw, Holy Smoke's married sister in Ohio, was delighted and bewildered five years later to receive an anonymous and most mysterious gift of several thousand dollars. It cost old Ezra a pretty penny to have her traced, but when money gives you leisure you have time to think, and when you have time to think you'll worry yourself into having a conscience before you know where you are

It's the root of all evil, without doubt.

The Fair Intellectual Club

W. M. PARKER

IN May 1717 three young Edinburgh ladies diverted themselves by walking in Heriot's Gardens. One of them proposed that they should start a society for studying and practising various accomplishments. other two cheerfully complied with the proposal. They thought it 'a great pity that women, who excel a great many others in birth and fortune, should not also be more eminent in virtue and good sense, which we might attain unto if we were as industrious to cultivate our minds as we are to adorn our bodies.' Accordingly, they held a meeting, and, after much serious conference, they decided that not more than nine of their sex should compose what they named 'The Fair Intellectual Club '.

Being sensible of the disadvantages their sex suffered for want of order and method in conversation, and being ambitious to imitate those who 'make the greatest figure in the learned and polite world', they drew up sixteen rules. One regulation stated 'that although we may, on proper occasions, make excursions in commendation of the genius and conduct of other people, yet none shall be guilty of practising the silly arts of censure and ridicule on pain of censure.'

Another rule declared 'that whosoever refuses to submit to the command and rebukes of the Club pronounced by Mrs Speaker shall be expelled from it, if sober reasoning can't prevail.' It was also stipulated 'that when death, marriage, or other important occurrences shall, in the course of Providence, remove any member from our Club, care shall be taken to make a speedy supply of her room, lest the Club suffer, or go to nothing.'

One of the ladies' aims was to have 'a rational and select conversation, composed of persons who have the talent of pleasing with delicacy of sentiments flowing from habitual chastity of thought'; they were eager 'to

keep out pretenders to mirth and gallantry, and all such who with constrained, obscene, and painful witticisms pester people with mixed companies.'

'HE fair ladies carried on the Club so secretly that it was not until two years after its establishment that they were discovered by an honourable gentleman, who, alas, betrayed them! The fair Secretary, in fact, was in love with the gentleman, and had divulged the secret. He was a member of an Edinburgh Athenian society, and he was generous enough to conceal the Club 'above three months from his intimate companions'. Indeed, he might have continued to keep the secret for ever had he not prevailed on the ladies 'to entertain his brethren of the Athenian society with an account of the origin and constitution of the Fair Intellectual Club'. As a punishment for her indiscretion, the Secretary was asked to write the Club's history in a letter to her lover. At his desire and that of his companions, the ladies reluctantly consented to its publication, by which they made their first open appearance.

This printed Account, dated 1720, is the record of what must have been one of the first ladies' clubs in Britain, if not, indeed, the very first. It is written in the highly formal 18th century style, and it expresses a quaint attitude of mind on the subjects discussed. In fact, it is something of a curiosity as being, probably, one of the earliest expositions of female intellectual emancipation.

"You cannot imagine, Sir," wrote the Secretary to her lover, "the joy we had when we found ourselves convened in the character of members of The Fair Intellectual Club. For my part I thought my soul should have leapt out of my mouth, when I saw nine ladies, like the nine Muses, so advantageously posted. If ever I had a sensible taste and relish of true

pleasure in my life, it was then. Oh how delightful is the pleasure of the mind! None knows it but those who value Reason and good Improvement above fine Shapes, Beauty, and Apparel.'

AFTER this rapturous outburst, the Secretary gave her correspondent a report of Mrs Speaker's speech to the members. Mrs Speaker had advocated, among other things, the necessity of reading proper books in their several homes. 'It is an injustice to deprive us of those means of knowledge. How else shall we express our fondness to have our natures reformed, and refute these scandalous aspersions cast upon our sex, that we are made up of Pride, Affectation, Inconstancy, Falsehood, Treachery, Tyranny, Lust, Ambition, Wantonness, Levity, Disguise, Coquetry, and the like ill things so often in the mouths and writings of men?'

These forthright words were followed, as a contrast, by an engaging naïveté, when she went on to compliment her colleagues on what they had already achieved. 'It is,' she said, 'to your extraordinary diligence and application that all that progress and advancement you have made in female accomplishments are owing . . . By your diligence you understand history, geography, arithmetic, and such like businesses, so useful in life, as well as any of your sex . . . Nor do you confine your studies so much as to neglect the French and Italian languages, which are accounted so polite and fashionable in this age. But when I consider the improvements all of you have made in the English language, I can never cease to admire your judgment and application . . . Without great industry and application it had been impossible for you to have become mistresses of the English language in such perfection . . . Few, very few, of the ladies I have had occasion to know can so much as spell . . . You have made such improvements in the sister arts of Poetry, Music, and Painting, for which your geniuses seem to have been designed, that few, if any, of our sex in this kingdom excel you in these accomplishments.'

These remarks would seem to infer that although the Club was an Edinburgh Club its activities were representative of what was being done, seemingly with less success, by alleged intellectual ladies elsewhere in Britain.

Mrs Speaker then warned the members of the danger of employing too much time on the noble arts. As regards poetry, 'which indeed used not to be the temptation of too many of our Scots ladies, what variety of charms are in it to captivate our minds! Great, unspeakably great, is its use in human life. But alas! There is so much enchantment, so much poison under a gilded cover that none should be trusted with it who want abundance of judgment and taste. The very reading, much more the composing, is dangerous. There is I know not what in it that insensibly leadeth the heart to Love, Idleness, and Frenzy . . . We cannot be too careful in the choice of authors and subjects. Every poem and every theme is not for common hands.'

Next to the Psalms and other poetical parts of the Bible, she recommended the writings of Sir Richard Blackmore, Mr Isaac Watts, and Dr Young, and also Milton and Cowley. 'Comedies should be read with caution, and few of them at all: but tragedies, well wrought, are highly to be prized and studied . . . I have seen none in English that I like better than Shakespeare's, Otway's, and Rowe's. I pretend not to understand the rules exactly, but I may be allowed to know my own nature and to approve most what works on it best.'

As for music, Mrs Speaker spoke from experience when she said that 'music in a special manner enervates and exposes the soul to be conquered by the first temptation that invades it. Pity it is that so many hours should be squandered away on sounds, and that we should take so much pleasure in gratifying a sense that has so often proven a traitor to virtue. If a Christian turn was given to it, it would be, like poetry, the greatest help to disrelish profane pleasures, and elevate the mind.'

She also subjected painting to the same restrictions, for too much time was spent 'in teaching a young lady to draw a flower, or paint on glass, &c., which should be employed in forming the mind to virtue, and the moral duties of life . . . But as you can give that variety and beauty, that regularity and grace to your pictures, which can only make them valuable, so you can order your time for the seasonable entertainment.'

Mrs Speaker's peroration ended with these words: 'May the Almighty favour our undertakings, and crown our endeavours with such fruits as may render us useful not only to ourselves, but to all we are concerned in, and exemplary to our whole sex in these and succeeding times.'

RESUMING her communication, the Secretary added that 'all the speeches, poems, pictures, &c. done by any member, from that to this day, are carefully kept. I have also by me an Index of the very subjects of our conversation all along.' She then transmitted to her lover correspondent a copy of a speech made by a young lady on being admitted into the Club. It was sent to him as a specimen of members' speeches at their admission. If the Secretary's first communication was rapturous, this effusion surpassed it in hyperbole.

Mrs M-B-, the veiled designation of the novitiate, regarded the honour conferred on her as so great that she was almost doubtful if she ought to believe it. 'Can I have the vanity to imagine I am judged worthy to join you in this establishment? . . . What can I offer you that may be worthy of the favour with which you have been pleased to honour me? Is it a wretched copy of verses, commendable rather on the account of my boldness in composing them than for the beauty of their thoughts, or the richness of their language? Is it because I have a tolerable ear for music and can play a spinet or flute to the diversion of my partial friends? Or is it because I can blend colours, imitate a draught, and make up a silly figure by my pencil? No, ladies, you are too well acquainted with the just value of things to recompense at so high a rate such low productions as mine as to offer me upon so slight a foundation an honour which the knowledge of my want of abilities and merit makes me ashamed to take.

It was not her purpose, she said to her fellow-members, to launch forth in commendation of their beauty, their airs, shapes, mien, and other external considerations. 'I leave excursions of that nature to your humble servants of the male sex, who, if they have discretion, cannot fail to celebrate your perfections, and, if they have wit enough, will give you more commendation than you would desire to have or hear . . Your very piety and religion receive a prevalency as well as a lustre from the elegancy of your miens and the gracefulness of your persons.'

She remarked finally that this was a Club 'that pities those whose high descent, whose out-side, makes up all the fame they know and vainly boast of. A Club that knows the true value and use of things is above the reach of envy, and secure of the fairest character. A Club whose glory is to pity, pardon, and

commend, but too great to ridicule, censure, and disdain. In a word, a Club whose match I despair to hear of or know till I join the innumerable company of angels and society of saints, arrived at consummate perfection.'

There was no doubt about the deep impression this harangue had made on the Secretary, who, resuming her letter, informed her lover: 'This, Sir, was the speech I valued so much, not merely on the account of the panegyric the lady was pleased to make upon our Club, but also for the genteel matter it contains and the graceful manner of her delivery, which last cannot be presented to you on paper. She says the beginning of it is an awkward translation of Boileau's speech at his admission into the French Academy, which she was obliged to have recourse to because she had but a day's time to prepare one. I own it is an imitation of that great Monsieur's speech on that occasion, but when you have compared the two I could almost engage you will determine in the lady's favour, all circumstances being rightly considered.'

Finally, she confides this message to her lover. 'We should be proud to be approven by you. As no person who has not been, or is, a member of our Club is privy to our management except yourself and your honourable brethren of an Athenian Society; so I conjure you to let none else into the secret by exposing this letter, or otherwise, without consent of our Club. We are not afraid of reproach or censure tho' our conduct was made public and our persons known to the world. But by our laws we are bound to maintain secrecy till all of us are willing to be known, which I do not expect you will entreat of us so soon.

'I conclude with giving you the agreeable assurance of our Club's unfeigned respect to yours, and particularly to yourself, whose genius and conduct they have been informed of by, Sir, Your most obedient and most humble servant, M. C.' And so the Account of the Fair Intellectual Club ends with these pretty compliments. One wonders if the honourable gentleman, the recipient of it, was, perhaps, the Rt. Hon. Charles, Earl of Lauderdale, for to him was dedicated The Edinburgh Miscellany (published in 1720), with which the Club was associated, and which achieved a second edition within the year. The publication, consisting of original poems, translations, and so on, by various hands, included among the items 'A Pastoral Elegy, sacred to the Memory of her deceast Lover', by a young lady, a member of the Fair Intellectual Club. Unfortunately there seems to be no record of the Club's subsequent activities, or of how long it continued to function.

The Iron Lung

E. H. TREWEEKS

ALTHOUGH it is unlikely that we will ever find ourselves in need of an iron lung, the very term still seems to make some people uneasy and apprehensive. That is unfortunate, because there is absolutely nothing about these mechanical aids to breathing which need be at all unnerving. In fact, since their invention some twenty-five years ago they have been responsible for the saving of many thousands of lives all over the world.

People who require the help of these respirators are usually cases of poliomyelitis, where the breathing muscles are affected, though they can also be used in cases of drowning, carbon monoxide poisoning, and even drug and alcoholic comas. The type most widely used is that in which all but the patient's head is enclosed in a rectangular box. The head itself goes through a hole in one end and a collar of soft rubber fits round the neck to make the compartment sufficiently airtight. In newer models, however, this end of the compartment, including the collar itself, is split horizontally in half, the upper half being hinged. The patient can therefore be placed straight down into the correct position on the mattress, and the most usual way of getting him in and out of the compartment is to mount the mattress upon a sliding stretcher, attaching this to the end supporting the collar.

THE thing that is remembered most vividly by many polios who have had to use an iron lung of this type is the intense

relief experienced when the electricallyoperated bellows-pump takes over from one's failing muscles. Up till that moment one's efforts to expand the chest and make these muscles work have made it feel as if a large weight were pressing down upon one's chest and stomach.

One does not know how long one is going to remain inside the lung, and at first one isn't really very interested! It may be a few weeks or a matter of days, though there have been some cases where people have had to use one for several years. Fortunately breathing muscles often begin to return to life soon after the initial fever is over and may never have been 100 per cent paralysed. To teach the recovering person to breathe on their own again, the bellows is stopped for a few moments; on the next day it is stopped for a few seconds longer; and so on. It is a day of triumph when it first remains silent for a whole hour.

There is little one can actually do when all but one's head is enclosed in a box, but one's field of vision can be increased with the aid of a large mirror. Warmth inside the compartment is provided by either heaters or lamps mounted inside the roof, and there are several systems for giving alarm if the pressure inside falls too low.

The bellows is connected by a largediameter flexible pipe to the far end of the lung and alternately lowers and restores the pressure inside. First it creates a negative pressure, and this slight vacuum causes the chest and lungs to expand, thus making the

patient inhale. The positive stroke then restores the normal atmospheric pressure and the person exhales. The actual rate at which this cycle takes place can be varied to suit each person's natural rhythm—usually about 20 per minute in an adult.

NE of the earliest iron lungs-if not the first-was the apparatus invented in 1931 by Dr Drinker of Harvard University, U.S.A. It was Lord Nuffield, however, who in 1937 enabled lungs to be widely used in Great Britain, for during that year he manufactured about seven hundred of the Both design, which originated in Australia, and generously presented them to hospitals all over the country. During the war development work came to a stop in Europe, and these Both respirators became our standard model until 1945. Since then energetic work upon improvements and new models has been resumed and is going on in many countries. To a large extent aluminium alloys and plastics such as perspex have replaced wood and steel in the construction of iron lungs. and the iron lung has ceased to resemble the boiler of George Stephenson's 'Rocket'. Some of the newer models also differ considerably from the box type. They are much smaller and more mobile, encasing only the patient's trunk and looking rather like a large breastplate of ancient armour. Their main advantage is that they provide easy access to the patient and leave the arms and legs free for treatment and exercise, but they are not used in cases of acute paralysis.

The various box-type respirators provide a measure of access through 'portholes', though some of the latest ones improve upon this considerably by having a large hinged lid. When this is open, the patient's head is temporarily covered by a perspex dome and the lungs are filled by positive pressure and

deflated by its release. This, of course, is the exact opposite to the cycle used when the compartment is closed. A simpler method is to use a mask instead of the dome, and this is more comfortable, for it removes the pressure from the ears.

Being thus able to receive physiotherapy from the very early stages greatly reduces the stiffness previously suffered by many polio users of this type of lung, and, among other makes, the Bristol design has an added refinement in that the rate of exhalation is slower than that of inhalation, as in one's natural breathing.

THE iron lung patient is quick to realise that talking can only be done when the bellows is making one exhale; going against it, or being out of step, as it were, is both tiring and painful. Likewise, there is a knack in swallowing food and drink, but one soon learns to do this at either the top or bottom of the bellows' strokes. In cases of bulbar polio, where the swallowing muscles themselves are affected, a special form of pressurising respirator is used, the pressure cycle of which is the same as that employed with the dome, though working on the lungs by way of a tube inserted in the windpipe.

All respirators are fitted with a means of operating the bellows by hand in the event of a breakdown. Careful maintenance is, of course, of vital importance, and each lung held ready for use is inspected and tested at regular and fairly frequent intervals, so that the chance of failure or inefficiency is remote. In the polio epidemic of 1947 nearly every boxtype respirator was in use.

To-day there is a vast amount of worldwide experience for designers and constructors to draw upon, and there is a constant quest to make these iron lungs even more reliable and better than ever.

Hiker's Pill

A hiker who sickened at Rhyl Was given a very nice pill By a doctor, who said, 'You must go straight to bed, And not quit till you've footed the bill.'

K. C. BRUCE.



Sunday Morning

DONALD DIESPECKER

MIKE was the doctor's son, and he and Harry used to play together. It was a fine morning now, and the two of them were sitting on a wall in the sunshine. It was very warm. 'It's always so still on a Sunday,' said Mike. He swung his legs and looked very mournful.

'Well, we could go down to the creek maybe,' Harry told him.

'No, it doesn't make any difference what we do. It's Sunday. Whatever we do we'll be thinking of that all the time. It isn't the same—except fishing, and that's too far to walk to-day.'

'M'mm,' said Harry. 'Here comes your Dad.'

The doctor was carrying his hat and fanning his face against the heat. He came down the path to the garage and went inside. The boys walked over. 'Are you going out, Dad?' asked Mike. 'Can we come for the ride?'

'I have to go to one of the mines. A native is injured. You can come if you like. Jump in the back.'

THEY went down the hill to the village and then drove through Tin Town. The place was deserted, but on the stoeps of some of the Kaffir stores they could see a few natives where they sat gossiping. Across the creek a wisp of smoke curled up from above the gums and wattles, and it seemed to be the only thing that moved. That, and the Christmas beetles shrilling away in a high-pitched screech. But you couldn't see those; only hear them.

The doctor's car turned off at the Blyde and they went along the cyanide-stained river for a half-mile or so. The wattles were very green now and the yellow blossom hung heavy, sickly-sweet from the branches. You could smell the mustiness of it even inside a motorcar. They went up the hill towards Columbia.

Mike and Harry were staring out at Pilgrims as the car climbed. The village drowsed in the hot hollow of the hills and nothing moved down there, nothing at all. 'What happened to the native, Dr Pond?' Harry asked.

The doctor leaned back in his seat somewhat and straightened his arms on the wheel as though considering carefully. 'They say he was in a stope when some rock fell on him. He shouldn't have been there. I don't know why. The ambulance is coming up too. You can see it through the trees.'

The boys looked out of the back window and saw the ambulance, very white in the hot

morning sun, and it came out of the trees and up the rough dirt-road of the hill. A pall of red-brown dust billowed out from behind it.

'Why did you have to come then, Dad?'

'He's badly hurt. They don't want to move him until I have a look. You know you can seriously injure a person by moving him? He might have internal injuries or broken bones, and moving him makes it worse.'

'Yes,' said Harry. 'Like the time a loco boy fell from the ore-train. They picked him

up and carried him into the shade.'
'And of course he was dead before they

put him down. But they meant well.'

'He screamed,' said Harry. 'I remember how he screamed. It was years ago now, but

I still remember it-'

'It makes an impression,' the doctor told him, and Harry wondered whether the doctor had understood. He had meant the scream—not the accident. The accident was bad, but the scream was worse. He thought he would tell the doctor, but he didn't. Harry was thirteen. He looked down at the river instead.

They were high now, perhaps a thousand feet up, and he could see the river stretching in a muddy snake-like wriggle to the reduction works. Beyond that the water was clear, and you could see it right up to the bend near Peach Tree and then on the other side across from the hill which covered it, where it ran wide and slow through wattles at Browns Hill. There were fine rainbows in the Blyde. If you walked hard from the Post Office you could have your rod up in an hour and a half; but you had to take short-cuts. It was best to start at first light, or even in the dark. That way you knew when there were other people on the river. If no cars came along the dirtroad to the river it was safe to try a grasshopper as bait. A reduction worker had done that on a Saturday afternoon once. He took a fine trout, but the club secretary was fishing Fourth Drift with friends and he asked to see the fish. That was the end of his licence. You had to be up early to use grasshoppers and worms. Fly-fishing wasn't so much fun.

'What's wrong?' asked Mike. 'You were

looking kind of funny.'

'I was just thinking,' said Harry. He said it in what he thought was a superior tone of voice. He didn't know why he did that. It sounded silly.

Mike was looking at the ambulance again. 'He's close to us, Dad,' he said.

'Yes,' said the doctor, not bothering to look

in the mirror. Then the road levelled suddenly and there was a series of dips and a fresh cool breeze as the car swung around the last bend and they could see the mine compound. The wind now blew a heavy smell of woodsmoke and grilled meat across to them and the doctor found himself visualising the dark, fatty steak, coal and ash encrusted, and he sniffed at the smell with appreciation. The mine boys came out of the huts like ants from a hill when they heard the car. The compound manager was waiting there with another man, outside the office. The doctor recognised the other as an assayer, and wondered why he was there. 'Stay here,' he said to the boys as he climbed out.

WE haven't moved him,' the compound manager said. 'He's still in that stope. Will you change and have a look at him?'

'No time for that,' said the doctor. 'Let's

go.

The ambulance arrived then as the men were walking across the broken shale from the mine. They all went into a tunnel. It was wet and they jumped along the sleepers trying to keep their shoes dry. The manager and the assayer wore rubber boots and they had carbide lamps, so that a strong yellow shaft of light cut into the dripping darkness. They turned left at a second branch and went up a dry tunnel. The shale was grey and damp, but there was no running water. The tunnel opened out and a small stope led down away from it. The reef was there. You could see the broad band of it running through the grey of the shale and down into darkness. At the end of the stope the injured man lay. They crawled in to him. There were two first-aid boys there trying to keep him quiet. They had to lie down too. The air was bad and everyone was sweating.

The boy lay a few feet ahead of the last timber support and a great slab of rock had come down on his back and head. The rock had been moved away, and the doctor stared and thought: What the hell was he doing in here on a Sunday morning, anyway? 'Give me that bag, will you,' he asked the men behind him, and then he gave the native a hypo shot and the man quietened down a little.

He was very weak.

'Can we move him?' asked the assayer.

'He'll die if we don't,' said the doctor. 'He'll probably die, anyway. There isn't much to hope for, but he'll have a better chance if we can get him to the hospital and

operate.'

They put him on a stretcher and took him out. Harry and Mike were out of the car and stood watching and waiting with the mine boys. When the stretcher came out they were able to see it very clearly. Mike walked away quickly. He went to the car. Harry stood there, not wanting to look, not wanting to turn and walk away. It was easier to just stand there and look. They put the stretcher down and Harry stared at the native. Through the mess of bright red, the rest of him looked grey. The black skin looked grey and dead. 'He's dead, isn't he?' asked Harry.

'Yes, he's dead now,' answered the doctor. There was a sigh from the miners—a sound like a hill breeze through the grass. The man was dead. Then they walked over to the car and the doctor banged his feet on the ground as he walked, to knock the mud off his shoes.

'What happened, Dad?' asked Mike.
'Dead,' said the doctor. The car turned

round and they were going down the hill again.
'Do many Kaffirs die in the mines, I

wonder?' Mike inquired.

'Natives,' the doctor told him. 'Not Kaffirs. I suppose a fair number do.'

Harry was thinking not of the dead man, but of the fact that it was still Sunday. It did not seem right, somehow-death on a Sunday. He knew that there would be people enjoying Sunday. They would be playing bowls or tennis at the recreation club, and his own parents would be sitting in deckchairs in the garden reading the papers from Johannesburg. Drowsy Sunday. quiet, still Sunday. But when he looked down at the village he noticed motor-cars and people moving, and there was suddenly movement in the place. It was better now that there was some movement. It made everything seem a little better. Peaceful Sunday; a dead native; and now the movement of life again. It seemed a little more proper. As they dropped down to the river again Harry could smell the wattle.

'U', 'A', 'X', or-?

Film Censorship in Britain

DAVID GUNSTON

IN Great Britain some 27 million people visit the cinema every week, and before their entertainment is presented to their eyes and ears they read the familiar decorated certificate of the British Board of Film Censors granting the film its 'U', 'A', or 'X' certificate, and duly initialled by the examiners who passed it. For most of those film-goers, perhaps, the few seconds that this certificate is screened are an old-fashioned, typically national formality that usefully announces the imminence of the desired picture and fortunately does not delay its coming overlong. For

the fastidious few, maybe, the ornate certificate bestows moral approbation upon what is to follow, or by its arbitrary classification denotes the kind of film one is to see.

But what are the facts? How does the censorship of films in this country work, and why is it considered necessary? What is the story that lies behind the seal of those stilted words, 'The British Board of Film Censors'?

UNDER the Cinematograph Act of 1909 local authorities were invested with the

power to supervise the character of films shown in the cinemas they licensed. It soon became obvious, of course, that some central censorship body would be needed if complete chaos were to be avoided, and so in 1912 the Board was set up on the initiative of the film industry itself. Now, by inserting various clauses in the licences they issue, the local authorities—some 700 of them—give legal effect to the Board's decision on all films, and in general practice the local authorities have come to accept the Board as the only necessary instrument of censorship, while for their part the film distributors early recognised the value of facing one central censor instead of 700. Strictly speaking, however, final responsibility about the type of films shown in this country still remains with the various local authorities, which can overrule the Board's decision and grant a local licence to show the film. This happens most often in the London area, only rarely elsewhere, for the simple reason that the distributors of a film refused the Board's approval must apply in turn to each of the 700 local authorities, giving them an opportunity of viewing the debated film. Conversely, of course, a local council may take an objection to a film given a certificate by the Board and thereby ban it in their area, but this right is only rarely used, the local authorities and the film industry generally preferring to leave censorship, such as it is, in the hands of the body appointed for the purpose.

Only the President of the Board himself is appointed by the cinema trade, the present distinguished holder of that office being Sir Sidney W. Harris, C.B., C.V.O., whose signature must be familiar to every cinema-goer. He assumes complete independence, appoints all his own staff, and is ultimately responsible for all decisions made. There is a belief in some quarters that a censorship body sponsored by the film industry itself and financed out of fees charged for viewing films can hardly be impartial, but in fact the Board's decisions may often be unpopular amongst film distributors, while a strict rule is that no member of the Board's staff must have any connections with the cinema industry.

HE bulk of the eventual responsibility to the film-going public, so much of it youthful, as well as the heavy burden of the day-today viewing of new films, falls upon the little team of full-time examiners. There are four men and two women, and in the tiny theatre behind the Board's spacious offices on the first floor overlooking London's pleasant Soho Square they sit in pairs watching films from ten until five every day. About 2000 new films are submitted for inspection every year. Of these, some 500 are full-length features, and the rest documentaries, travelogues, cartoons, and shorts of every conceivable kind, including publicity and advertisement productions.

The examiners' daily task is at once delicate and onerous, for they have to give every film their unrelaxed attention—they are not allowed to leave the theatre during projection-and they also have to anticipate audience reaction, which may be governed by a dozen different factors, not least being the mood in which the public will come to the film-casual, escapist, perceptive, expectant, tired. Above all, they have constantly to keep in mind the possible effect of each film upon children, adolescents, and even immature adults who may be unduly impressionable.

Such a task calls for especial qualities of mind and physique, to say nothing of good, untiring eyesight. In fact, Mr A. T. L. Watkins, the brisk Secretary to the Board, has described his staff as 'supermen' with 'what the superman seldom possesses, a sense of humour.' This last is, of course, extremely important, and allied to the necessary firstclass education, breadth of vision, tolerance, experience of the world and public tastes everywhere, abundant common-sense, the lively, resilient mind and the unusual dedication required for such a vocation, shows that Mr Watkins's description is not such an exaggeration as might at first be thought. Certainly the team of examiners deserve our sympathy, if not solely for the nature of their job, then for the fact that in their off-duty time they are actively encouraged to go to the cinema-not to spy upon the obedience of distributors in making cuts as ordered, nor indeed for relaxation, were that possible, but to keep in touch with public taste and audience reactions. A good censor, it is felt at Soho Square, must keep in the closest possible touch with public feeling about films, and must always reflect the best of public taste.

AS is well known, there are three categories into which an approved film may be placed upon examination-namely, 'U', 'A', and 'X'.

The 'U' category, denoting universal suitability, is self-explanatory, but it should perhaps be mentioned that not all 'U' films are necessarily intended for children. An adult film may receive this grading if it contains no harmful elements, or if its point lies above the head of younger audiences.

The old 'H' category, for horrific films, lapsed in 1951, since it dealt only with horror films of the *Dracula* or *Frankenstein* type, which are now included in the 'X' category. Whatever may be thought of the choice of that particular letter of the alphabet, and the unfortunate association it produces in many people's minds, it is nevertheless a very important category, allowing as it does serious films on obviously adult themes, or on other themes whose treatment is so 'frank, realistic, or sordid' as to make them quite unsuitable for anyone under sixteen, to be shown to wholly adult audiences.

The much-criticised 'A' category is something of a compromise, since it includes many films not really unsuitable for older children. but leaves the decision as to whether they shall see them to parents. The idea behind this category is not, as is commonly supposed, that the presence of a parent or guardian automatically safeguards the child, but simply that the parent must decide whether or not to take the child to see the film in question. It is a liberal view, assuming that the parent has some knowledge of what the film is likely to be about, and drawing the parent, who after all knows the child concerned best, into the business of censorship, making him play the most responsible part. The 'A' category is obviously a common-sense idea, although it may be open to numerous objections, as well as to all-too-easy abuse. It should be remembered. however, that the censor's chief concern is the mental well-being of the young, and that he caters primarily for the great mass of regular cinema patrons, the folk who go once, twice, even three times a week, month after month, not the occasional educated viewer. As Mr Watkins says: 'Contrary to popular opinion, the censor takes no particular pleasure in his task and reserves a special welcome for the film he need not touch. He would be the first to subscribe to the idea that if the world were composed exclusively of emancipated and intelligent adults, he could safely resign his office. He must also subscribe to the idea that the world, and the cinema audience in particular, is not so composed.'

WHILST the feeling of high responsibility for the impressionable, even gullible mass of regular film-goers is most noticeable, the atmosphere at Soho Square impresses an outsider as very far from pontifical and portentous. Indeed, common-sense clearly pre-If the two examiners first viewing a film agree upon its category without alteration. it is granted the appropriate certificate. The examiners' initials always appear in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen certificate. But their decision must be unanimous. If there is disagreement, the film is shown again to another pair, but if further disagreement or difficulty results, or if the film is obviously a controversial one, or contains questionable scenes or dialogues, then further opinions are sought. Other members of the Board, the Secretary and the President himself, who has the last word, may be called in, and the entire Board may view the film several times, if need be, before a decision is reached. The Snake Pit, the notorious American film dealing with life in a mental hospital, was, for instance, seen eight times before it was given a certificate.

Each examiner must state his objections in writing, and serious cuts in a film are usually confirmed by other views. A common alteration in a film is for the deletion of certain expressions, or lines of dialogue, or for the reduction, rather than the complete removal, of certain scenes. Thus a particularly bloody fight, or an excessively suggestive or amorous scene, an unnecessary display of nudity or vulgarity, may be trimmed, or even reduced from close-up to long-shot, without the whole sequence being removed. Where such partial cuts are recommended, the Board insists on seeing the final release version of the film, but where complete removal of scenes is requested, a written statement that this has been done is usually accepted from the distributors.

In practice, the cinema industry works very closely with the censors, basing its treatments on previous decisions of the Board, and now frequently submitting scripts for tentative approval as to theme or treatment before shooting begins. At the same time, public taste and fashion changes, and the Board's decisions inevitably change over the years. Themes once considered impossible or totally unspeakable are now allowed, perhaps with modifications based on public decency, and producers are, of course, always introducing new treatments of controversial topics, so that the Board must adopt a flexible and enlight-

ened policy towards them. Whereas, for example, years ago Eisenstein's great revolutionary picture Battleship Potemkin was banned on the ground that it might incite naval mutiny or revolutionary violence, we can now see it under an 'X' certificate. Other themes, much in the public eye, like the colour bar, may now be allowed if treated intelligently, whereas they once might have been banned.

Nevertheless, the censors must constantly keep before them the spectacle of the weekly millions for whom the cinema may be little more than a habit, and also the minority groups who seek toleration in this country more successfully than anywhere else. Subjects involving religion and atheism, politics, perversion, drug-addiction, and the like need especially careful consideration before they can be widely passed.

It is interesting to note, by the way, that the British Board does not work to any written code, as does the American Havs Office, and its attitudes, if they correctly reflect informed public taste, must constantly change. There is an unwritten law in the trade that a certificate once granted remains in force for about ten years. If a film is revived after this period, the distributor may confirm with the Board that such a placing still holds good, but if the film is very old, he usually resubmits it for re-examination. Very often, too, old classic films revived commercially have been given sound-tracks, commentary, additional dialogue, or new subtitles if foreign: all these have to be passed by the Board.

ALL the time the censor must imaginatively anticipate the likeliest reaction of an audience. Some will like toughness, others will detest it: Catholics will object to treatments of divorce, temperance-reformers will decry pictures glorifying alcohol, and so on. The censor cannot fly in the face of all these groups of opinion, any more than he can realistically work to a rigid set of rules. In the last resort, it is the intention of the film's director that has to be studied and respected. A delicate handling of an awkward theme or situation by one director will get by, whereas a cruder exploitation of exactly the same thing by another will quite rightly be condemned.

The censor also has to keep an open mind, and not be afraid to change it. A recent case in point concerns Walter, Wanger's harsh exposure of U.S. prison conditions, Riot in Cell Block 11. This film was originally refused a certificate, but after receiving high praise from influential critics at last year's Edinburgh Festival it was reconsidered and placed in the

'X' category.

Although all censorship is negative in its action, it remains regrettably necessary with such a powerful mass medium as the film. Yet, even so, the censor can assist constructively—by not hampering courageous or experimental films that seek to break new ground, so bringing them to the widest possible audience in spite of the objections of cranks, and thus slowly and indirectly, but nevertheless surely, raising the level of public appreciation. It is a sobering thought.

Last Thrush

Listen! That is the thrush with the star in his bill
And darkness under his feathers. Hark
How he scatters the brilliant last light there
Among the buds of the pear,
As though music and light must flower together
In one white flame and perfume the air.
But soon he will stop,
And the flower-shawl
Will lie on the grass
In the dark;
But, O love,
Now I can keep for the hours, for the years of a life,
The song, the light, the tree,
And the blossoms that never fall.

MARJORIE STANNARD.

Choosing the Officers

Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. H. DE LA FARGUE

THE writer got his commission, it had better be confessed at once, by going to the door of the orderly-room and saying to the Colonel: 'Your car is at the door, sir.' He was then a lance-corporal, and attached for the day in some sort of honorary capacity to the Colonel's person. He was sent for from stables next morning—the Colonel did not appear after lunch—and the Colonel said to him: 'Would you like a commission in this regiment, my boy?' The answer, of course, was a stammering 'Yes, sir,' and he was told there and then to go home and wait for it, which he did, and became an officer and a gentleman.

He had had a year of barrack-life in a real regiment before gaining his commission by saying to the Colonel in the right sort of voice and at an opportune moment that his car was at the door, but these were his only tests of fitness to be an officer, and he was never trained to be one before the warrant was signed.

The young men who now are recommended to the War Office as fit to be trained to be granted a National Service commission are required to undergo a prescribed series of tests before it is decided whether to send them for Officer Cadet Training or not. The tests last for two days, from noon to noon.

The candidates arrive twice a week, and there may be upwards of a hundred of them in one batch, though ninety-six is the required number for four Boards. They are divided up and allotted to Boards in camp, and the Boards are given the names of colours—Red Board, Yellow Board, and so on. The candidates wear coloured waistcoats over their uniform to match the Board to which they are assigned, and the waistcoats are prominently numbered, the candidate being called by his number in preference to his name and regiment or corps.

Each Board is divided into three groups, and each group normally consists of eight candidates, not more. The President of each Board is a full Colonel; and he is assisted by a Major and a Captain for each group. The proceedings commence with a talk by the Presidents, and each Board then splits up into groups, and each group, as occasion demands, into smaller divisions, down to the individual. The tests, both inside and out, oral, penwork, and physical, are designed to bring out the powers of initiative, command, intelligence, bearing, quickness, and the good sense and the common sense of the candidates, and attention is paid to the capacity of each to be what is called a good mixer, and to his bodily fitness.

The Captain talks to all the candidates in his group, the President has a word with all the candidates in his Board; the personal interview conducted by the Major is a searching business. A closing address is given by the Presidents, and when the Testing Staff have consulted together, each candidate is told by the Captain whether he is to be recommended to the War Office for Officer Cadet Training or not. The President then speaks individually to:

- (a) All Deferred Watch cases—i.e. those who are asked to come back in three months' time.
- (b) Any candidate whom he considers would benefit from a pep talk.
- (c) Any failed candidate who wishes to know why.

The Commandant of the camp in which the four to six Boards function is a Brigadier. He supervises the tests in a general sort of way, and is responsible for seeing that a uniform standard is maintained on all the Boards; he deals with matters of policy, corresponds with the War Office, and keeps, as it might be put, the cold outside world from getting at the

Presidents. He administers the whole set-up and gives any rulings that may be called for on procedure, but he has no voice in the question of whether a candidate passes or fails.

HE Boards are furnished through the War Office with the recommendation from the unit in which the candidate is serving as a National Serviceman; the candidate's personal particulars-his parentage, educational qualifications, hobbies and pursuits, profession (if he has one), where he has lived, etc., are supplied by the candidate on arrival in camp; and to all this material is added, if possible, the opinion of the headmaster of his school, or of someone qualified to speak of his educational career, on his suitability and fitness for commissioned rank, whether, that is, he who had charge of the boy outside his home in his formative years thinks, or does not think, that the young man he now is will make a good officer. The double qualification 'a good officer' is held to be important. The accent is on the second word, and in his closing address the President of each Board is careful to stress in encouraging and sympathetic language that failure to be considered to be fit to be an officer does not by any means imply that failure will attend the unsuccessful candidate in other walks of life.

The practice has been adopted of inviting headmasters who may not have any very wide experience of what is required by the Army, or of the methods employed to find the right stuff, and of what, in consequence, is required of them in their reports, to visit the camp and see the tests in action. The opinions expressed by headmasters and other educational authorities, tutors, dominies, pastors, and the like, vary in degrees of reliability and comprehensiveness very considerably, as is natural, but, generally speaking, they are helpful in that they have been found more often than not to have anticipated the Board's conclusions, suggesting that what the boy was the young man had become.

A unit commander's responsibilities in this matter of recorded opinion are, of course, more immediate and exact, and what he thinks he states briefly and in terse military form. He treats the aspirant categorically. He is not justified in withholding an application which he personally considers (though the reasons for any misgivings may be given) to be doubtful, or in declaring a borderline case—not

always the same thing. The keynote is optimism and not pessimism up to the time the Board handles the applicant. The net must be spread as widely as possible.

The information which accompanies the formal application to the War Office enables that body to distinguish in general terms, and in the light of the necessary regulations in force, between applicants who, on the basis of documentary evidence, may have the makings of an officer within the framework of the rules, and those who, by no official stretch of the War Office imagination, have. But the aim is the same. What was required of an officer is still required of him, and, in effect, a great deal more trouble is now taken to ensure that what was good enough in theory in the past shall, in the present, be a principle enforced. The dossiers of the failed candidates are filed for future reference in a national emergency.

THE tests are designed to meet the requirements of a modern army and to satisfy everyone that what were closed doors to many shall henceforward be open to all young men on the threshold of their careers, and that all who are capable shall be given equal opportunities for leadership in war.

It is possible that to 'war' at the close of the preceding paragraph should have been added 'and peace'. A necessary preliminary to success in war is training, but war is the ultimate test. The emphasis should be on it, and although the two words cannot be entirely divorced, 'peace', if it is put in at all, should come first, for it is the period devoted to the preparation for war. It has been thought advisable to labour this point in view of the nature of the methods now in force to find the best officers, and of the attitude of some of the candidates who are responding to these methods.

The tests appear, of course, to many to be a waste of time and money, and one headmaster of a grammar-school in the West Country expressed the view that he would have treated some of the candidates he saw a great deal more roughly. But it is against the background of policy that the system must be judged, and not the least interesting of the various reactions to it is the ferment in the souls of many ageing gentlemen who, twenty years ago, would have seen such newfangled ideas damned first, and now believe that there

is in existence a nefarious plot to keep the right type of officer from his lawful territorial heritage, with particular reference to sons, nephews, and protégés with county or family affiliations. But all that has happened is that the protégé must take his chance on a broader and lower level of selection if he is an applicant for a National Service commission.

The writer wanted to know why the Testing Staff made a point of inviting the candidates to smoke during interviews and talks. Was this a trap, a subterfuge? Could marks be gained or lost by this means? Apparently not. There is no intention and no desire to catch a candidate out. The idea is to put candidates at their ease. No attempt is made to assess courage or honesty-difficult matters to deal with, perhaps, but liable, nonetheless, to come out in the wash, if not to-day, then to-morrow or next week. The discerning eye might take a sniper's shot at sight at either trait; marks, mentally, might be given to those who abstained from smoking. In fact, however, impressions do not count, there must be no guesswork, no psychology. What is ascertainable in respect of what is required is systematically worked out and marked up as the wheel turns on the spot, and the sum of the marks obtained must approximate to the result and represent the candidate as he emerges from tests based on a rigid adherence to methods of trial and error. Headmasters' reports are no more than an interesting check-up.

HE candidates are placed in the category of gentlemen cadets for a space of fortyeight hours, and this part of the treatment, it seemed to the writer, was overdone and wore the air of a stratagem. A characteristic of stratagems is duplicity, and a candidate of a suspicious or dour disposition scenting anything of this sort might well resent it, and react in consequence in a manner unfavourable to his own chances. It is not, moreover, a device which lives very comfortably with precept, for, for one thing, it relies for success in forced conditions on looseness of speech. 'Powers of expression' is one of the attributes The habit (that of familiarity) at stake. seemed, therefore, to raise issues of an incompatible nature, and to be liable to mislead. In one instance, it was thought, it certainly did mislead, for the candidate, trying to be gay, forgot to listen to his instructions.

It has been said of unit commanders that when in doubt whether they were justified or not justified in forwarding an application for a National Service commission to higher authority for disposal they should take an optimistic rather than a pessimistic view. It was also said that their misgivings might take one of two forms, which were not, it was suggested, of clear necessity quite the same thing. There were doubtful cases, and there were also borderline cases. What was meant was this. In the doubtful case the doubt is personal to the unit commander—the man who has the responsibility of deciding; in the borderline case there is no doubt in anybody's mind that the applicant is a borderline case. This last example, for instance, the one in the marginal category, will not run away, a private question always at the back of the unit commander's mind, and it requires only an inch to send him on his way to undergo his tests. Shall that inch be given? Everyone likes him. But is he up to it? This applicant (in the marginal category) has cropped up, of course, since the year dot, and usually slipped in fairly effortlessly until recent times. Ouite often his father's regiment would take him only too willingly. But the other example, the one in the doubtful category, is such a queer mix-up, and so completely off the track of the unit commander's experience, that he cannot make head or tail of him, and leaves the business to someone else, being only certain that he is not sure what to make of the applicant. He could not lay claim to the particular consideration of any regiment. He is a product of policy-a strange, new, outlandish type, taciturn, awkward, shy, reserved, or a creature given to the expression of the oddest philosophies and unheard-of sentiments, and it is small wonder that the unit commander is foxed. A War Office Selection Board will have to deal with him-and it does. It will also have to deal with the other.

THE writer, when present as an observer, fastened his particular attention on two candidates, one of whom was a product of policy and the other a sample in this context of a time that has gone by. They wanted commissions in the same army.

The product of policy had been to a North Country university, where he had obtained some dazzling honours in chemistry. His interests were drama, music, and verse, but

he was, in fact, interested in all of us. His name was Hermann. He did well in his field tests and paper work, but his answers at the last to some persistent questions put by the Major were revealing. What then emerged on the post, so to speak, but only on the post, was that this candidate would bring diplomacy to bear in the carrying out of orders conveyed by a superior officer, and fight only if his conscience at the time decided that the circumstances warranted fighting, an admission which suggested that he might fight if running away was an impracticable proposition, but, equally, that he might lay down his arms if he thought at that precise moment that it was unworthy of him or his country to continue the struggle. A great deal of time and patience were spent on this candidate, far more time and patience than on anyone else. In circumstances in which he would have stood very little chance with a really perspicacious Commanding Officer of the old school, the washing-out process under the system here in vogue was protracted almost beyond the limits of endurance from the standpoint of an observer. And yet it is quite possible that had this candidate successfully negotiated this first fence, which he did not, little else on a long, stiff course would have stopped him, and he might well have galloped home. He was a smart young man.

His counterpart, the sample, was a Jock in the Black Watch, who would have liked to join their battalion in Kenya as an officer. His name was Hay. He had already appeared before the Board and had been told to come back in three months' time. 'He's no flyer,' said the Major. This candidate, who had been educated at Eton, had an absolute passion for sheep. His essay had been about the hills and something about red deer. He knew more about hill-farming than the Major, but when asked what he knew about 'General China' and about something else then in the news he appeared to know nothing about either matter, until the Major, having failed to get anything out of him, indicated what they were about, when he said: 'Oh, that,' and by a painful process of elimination and extortion proceeded to show that he knew at least something about both subjects. Forceps had had to be used on the Jock, but then they had had to be used on the smart young

At twenty-six, the eldest in the group was in the Royal Engineers as a National Serviceman. He had been educated at Edinburgh Academy and had graduated in civil engineering. The Board has not the power except in very specially reasoned circumstances to recommend a candidate for a commission in an arm of the service other than that in which he is serving as a National Serviceman. This candidate was quiet and sober, but not wildly exciting, nor, on the face of it, particularly resourceful. But he was, for all that, and in spite of the warning which has already been conveyed that the Board must touch nothing so problematical as courage, in some odd and inexplicable way a man instinctively to be welcomed in a tight corner. He was the born fighter. Another. who came from Dumbarton, had been trained in hotel management and desired to be considered for a commission in the Army Catering Corps.

Unit Commanders had expressed doubts about three candidates in this group, and these were the smart young man, the engineer, and the chap from Dumbarton. Six members of this group, including the Jock and the engineer, were considered to be fit to be sent for Officer Cadet Training, after a struggle in the case of one (the one from Dumbarton) between the President on the one side and the Major and the Captain on the other, the President being less sceptical than his colleagues, and gaining his point. Two candidates in this group, the Jock and the engineer, were not smoking during the final address before the results were announced, and the Jock showed traces of anxiety. Had this candidate failed again, it was felt that he would have gone back to his depot and his hills blaming no one but himself, and that one could not feel quite so sure about the smart young man. The writer also felt that these tests could be represented as a succession of contests waged and decided in the national conscience between different types of character and those to whom had been entrusted the welfare and good name of the British Army, and that, all in all, the element of tradition had been preserved.



Joxer

S. P. SHARPE

ONE day I was fly-fishing on an Irish lough. As we drifted towards the shore I saw before me an imposing residence surrounded by woods, and asked the gillie about it.

'Ah,' he said, 'that's the Grange, and nobody knows it betther nor meself, for I was gamekeeper there in the year nineteen hundhred and wan. Nineteen hundhred and wan—thim wor the days—when Guinness was tuppence a bottle, and whiskey thruppence a glass. No mothor cars—no flying maachines—and pace and plenty all over the land.

'The way I kem to be keeper was like this. The keeper—poor ould Muldoon—died, and wan day the masther sent for me and said that as I was handy with the gun and with the rod, and understood wild life, he would be willin' to give me the job. "I can't give ye a cottage," he said, "as I would not, av coorse, put Muldoon's widow out, and I know ye wouldn't wish that. But that won't matther in the laste," says he, "as ye're a bachelor. I could put up a bed for ye in wan of the lofts in the yard, an' ye could have your males in the kitchen."

'When he said that, I closed with the offer at once, for I always heerd tell that there was lashin's to ate and lashin's to dhrink at the Grange, and I was not misinformed. I had me breakfast at eight, and at wan to the minute there was a shmoking-hot dinner on the table. I had me tay at six, and me supper at nine. Ah, them suppers—there was four maids in the house, and ye know women be's very designin'. They knew full well I was a bachelor, and there was a regular competition between them as to which would bring me the nicest things from the dinin'-room table for me supper. They brought me jellies an' custhards, apple-pies an' thrifle puddings. It was grand, I tell ye.

'The only drawback was the misthress. She was the biggest divil in the county—a rale tare-an'-ages divil she was, an' no mishtake. The whole household was in dhread of her—that is, all except Joxer.

'Joxer was a little white-haired terrier, and she thought the world of him. Joxer wasn't his rale name. His rale name was the grandest name I ever heerd tell of in me life. I disremember it now, but it's of no consequence. He only used the grand name when he went to shows, where he won many a prize. At home he answered to Joxer.

'Now, Joxer was like a Christian. He was fed on chops; he had baths; he had his own medicine-chest, and his own brush and comb,

and every mornin' the misthress brushed him and combed him from head to foot, and then she shprinkled him all over with eau de cologne to make him shmell nice—d'ye know.

WAN mornin', as I was startin' on me rounds, the masther says to me: "I'm thinkin' of knockin' some trees at the far end of the wood, and I should like the benefit of

ver addvice."

"All right, sir," says I, and I tucked me gun under me arm and we started off, and Joxer follied us. I was surprised the masther didn't ordher him back, as he had no likin' whatever for Joxer, notwithstandin' all the prizes he won. Ye see, he thought the misthress med too much fuss over him—though av coorse he daren't say that. Howsomedever, it was not my place to ordher him back, so on we went.

'As bad luck would have it, a rabbit bolted from undher me feet, and Joxer med afther the

rabbit.

"Shoot that rabbit," says the masther.

'I put up me gun and fired, but instead of hittin' the rabbit, I hot the dog.

'Joxer gev wan screech, turned a complete somersault, and lay on the broad of his back, as dead as a shtone; the charge got him under the oxter, and pinitrated to the heart.

"Oh, murdher," says I, "how will I ever face the misthress afther this, and ye know, sir, ye're responsible—ye bid me do it."

"I bid ye shoot the rabbit and not the dog," says he.

"If that's what ye're goin' to say to her," says I, "I'll lose me job."

"Ye sure will," says he, "that is, if ye're gom enough to let on ye done it."

"How am I to avoid lettin' on?" says I.
"See that foxhole?" says he. "Stuff Joxer
into it. Now, clamp down the earth with yer
foot."

'When I done this, there was not a sign of Joxer to be seen.

""Now," said he, "there's not a schrap of ividence agin ye, and don't ye ever tell mortial man or mortial woman what ye done this day."

'This made me more aisy in my mind, as the masther was a Justice of the Pace—I'm spakin' of the days before we had Home Rule—and av coorse understood all about ividence.

'When we had marked the trees for fellin', the master looked at his watch and said: "It's twenty to wan, and as the misthress will be upset over Joxer, I'll borry the bystickle at the back-gate lodge and get me lunch at the hotel in Ballymun, where at any rate I'll have it in pace. Your dinner will be waitin' for ye when ye get back, and remember, mum's the word."

'I WAS very nervous goin' back by meself, and when I got near the Grange I saw the misthress stampedin' about the lawn like one diminted. When she saw me, she kem prancin' forward. "John," said she, "Joxer is losht—Joxer is losht. Did he go out with you and the masther this mornin'?"

"No, ma'am," says I, "I didn't see nothin'

of him this blessed day."

"I see how it is," says she. "Some blackhearted schoundhrell from Ballymun has sthole him. But I'll have the law on him—I'll have the law on him. Go ye into Ballymun

and fetch out the Sergeant."

'I thought I might as well have my shmokin'hot dinner, which was waitin' for me, before
settin' out on what I, av coorse, knew would
be a wild-goose chase, so I said: "Wouldn't
it be betther, ma'am, if we wor to give Joxer,
say, half-an-hour or so, to see if he would turn
up?"

"Go ye and do as I bid ye, and do it at wanst," says she, stampin' her feet on the

ground like an angry bull.

"There was nothin' to do but get on me bystickle and ride the four miles to Ballymun, where I met the Sergeant comin' out of the barracks. "Oh, Sergeant," I says, "Joxer has been sthole—Joxer has been sthole, and the misthress is in a terrible state and wants ye up at wanst."

"I'm off to me dinner now," says he, "but

I'll call up in the afternoon."

""Oh, Sergeant dear," says I, "I daren't face the misthress in her prisent timper unless I have ye with me, and as for yer dinner, I can assure ye that there's the besht of atin' and the besht of dhrinkin' up at the Grange."

""Having regard to the extinuatin' carcumstance ye mintion," says the Sergeant, "I shall proceed to the Grange forthwith." The Sergeant, ye know, had a grand way of

expressin' himself.

'We got up on our bystickles, and as I didn't want to be axed no questions, especially by a policeman, I med the pace for the Sergeant, and he was too winded to ax me any.

WHEN we arrived, the misthress told her shtory.

"Well, ma'am," said the Sergeant, "from my experience, which is unaque, and me knowledge of the county, which is unsurpashed, I would say that Joxer has not been sthole. Let's consider the matther in all its bearin's. Joxer is a most distinguished-lookin' dog, and is as well known in Ballymun as ye are yerself, for ye always take him with ye when ye go shoppin'. Now, I'll ax ye this question, ma'am: 'How is a thafe to dispose of a dog like Joxer in a place like Ballymun?' It simply can't be done. My idea is that Joxer went chasin' rabbits in the woods, and got shtuck in a rabbit-hole, or mebbe a foxhole."

'Oh, me knees trimbled underneath me when I heard him spakin' of foxholes.

"I would suggest, ma'am, that John takes a sphade on his shouldher and goes through the woods whisthlin' for Joxer. Joxer will know his whisthle and give tongue, an' all John will have to do is dig him out, and ye'll have yer little doggie back. As I shall have to wait here, ma'am, pindin' the result of John's invistigation, I might make bould to mintion that, in me agerness to be of assistance, I kem away without me dinner. Mebbe ye would have the kindness to ordher me some light refreshment in the kitchen."

"Ye shall have the best dinner the kitchen can provide. I shall give the matther me own personal attintion—And you, John," says she, "go ye and get a sphade and carry out the Sergeant's ordhers, and be quick about it."

'So I had to take a sphade, and go whisthlin' through the woods, though I knew full well poor Joxer couldn't hear me, but I daren't stop, because when I looked through a clearin' in the woods I seen her standin' on the lawn listenin'. After about half-an-hour, I musthered up courage to go back, and when I reached the lawn the Sergeant kem out of the kitchen, and from the twinkle in his eye I knew he had had a bottle of Guinness to his dinner—mebbe two.

"In view, ma'am," says he, "of the negative nature of John's report, I must revise the opinion I expressed earlier on. There is no doubt now that Joxer has been shtole, but don't let that worry ye. I'll have him back. I have twenty-six policemen undher my command in the barrack, and I'll ordher every man jack of them to be on the lookout for Joxer. I'll do more nor that, ma'am—I'll

detail wan consthable to inspect ivery thrain laivin' Ballymun, in case the thafe should try to smuggle Joxer away to Dublin in a bashket.

"Now, ma'am, we musht conshider the matther from another pint of view. When the thafe realises the police are on the watch, he may be timpted to do away with Joxer, so as to desthroy the ividence, so to spake. So do you put an advirtisement in to-morrow's issue of the Ballymun Watchdog, offerin', say, ten pounds reward for Joxer's return, an' say no questions axed, but don't say ye done this on my addvice, because when ye say no questions axed, ye're compoundin' of a felony, and it would be my duty to take action in the matther-but I needn't tell ye I'll turren the blind eye to the advirtisement. I would have ye know, ma'am, that compoundin' of a felony is a sarious offince undher the common law of England. I would furthermore have ye know, ma'am, that the common law of England is framed with the view to the protection of ivery man and ivery woman in the realm, be they male or be they female."

'Oh, the Sergeant was a most eloquent spaker, he larnt it from the solicitors at Petty Sessions.

"Oh, Sergeant," says the misthress, "ye're a most wonderful man. I shall cartainly do as ye suggest. I'm glad the masther is a magistrate. I'll see to it that he gets ye med a head conshtable, or mebbe an officer. Now, what do ye say to a shmall dhrop of alcoholic refreshment before ye go back to put yer policemen on the thrail."

"Well, ma'am," says he, "I considher it part of my duty to discourage, so far as in me lies, the consumption of alcoholic liquors, but if ye'd ordher the butler to give me the laste taste of yer fifteen-year-old whiskey, I'd be proud to dhrink the health of a very gracious lady."

"Thank ye, Sergeant," says she, makin' him a most iligent bow. "I'll give the butler the necessary ordher—and you, John," says she, "go ye into the kitchen and get yer dinner, and bring the Sergeant wid ye." And while I was atin' me ruined dinner I had the mortification of seein' the Sergeant lower a half-tumbler of ould Irish whiskey, which he done at wan gulp, and without a dhrop of wather.

NEXT day at dinner the maid, showed me the advirtisement, and when I went out I met the misthress. "Do ye think, John,"

says she, "the thafe will bring Joxer home to-night."

"Oh he sure will, ma'am," says I, "he sure will."

'Lather I met the masther. "Did ye see the advirtisement, John?" says he.

"I did, sir," says I.

"Did ye notice ten pounds reward?"

"I did, sir," says I.

"Did ye notice that she didn't say Joxer must be alive?"

"I didn't notice that, sir, but shure it has nothin' to do wid me."

"Oh, but it has," says he. "Ye've only to dig Joxer up and bring him to her, and she must give ye the ten pounds. I'm a magistrate, and I'll see that she keeps her word."

"I wouldn't dig Joxer up," says I, "not for

wan hundhred pounds."

'When Joxer didn't turn up, the misthresss's timper got worse nor ever. Even the Sergeant kem in for it—he was no longer a most wonderful man, but an oul' fool.

'The turmoil didn't last long, though, for wan mornin' two bailiffs walked in and took possession of the whole place for debt, and the masther and the misthress went off by the afthernoon thrain and never stopped till they got to London. Lather on, we heard that the gintleman we all thought so wealthy was worth nothin' at all. Did I say nothin'?-He was worth twenty-five thousand pounds less than nothin', for that was the amount of the defeeciency when the accounts wor med up. Shure, no bank account could shtand the goin's-on there was in that place-shootin' parties, dinner parties, card parties, horse leppin' and bettin'-no bank account could shtand it.

'The upshot of the whole business was that the place had to be auctioned at the finish, and the nuns—God bless them—bought it, and it's now a convent. And as, av coorse, the nuns didn't want a gamekeeper, I losht me grand job, and had to come back once more to the gillyin'.'

Dew-Nature's Wonder

E. GRIFFITHS

DEW is the by-product of a process of checks and balances with which nature has prevented destruction of the earth. Physicists say that if the immense quantities of heat radiated to the earth's surface by the sun had been stored up, the earth would have been destroyed long ago. The disaster has been averted because the earth cools during the night by sending much of its heat back to the cold and empty heavens. This cooling-down process produces dew, one of nature's greatest blessings to man.

Dew is one of the most beautiful of all the earth's phenomena. It provides much of the beauty of an early morning walk, when all plantlife is sparkling with dewdrops. It covers the rose-petals with diamonds and fills lily-cups with the nectar that bees search for as soon as the sun rises.

Many rose culturists insist that they need moonlight to raise beautiful blooms. It is dew, however, not moonlight, that increases the fragrance of flowers and refreshes all growing things. Dew forms only when the sky is clear, so roses and others flowers show its refreshing effects on mornings after clear moonlight nights.

The importance of dew goes beyond the aesthetic. There are several places in the world where this moisture of the night is an essential factor in the national economy. In some hot countries dew is sufficient to take the

place of rain which is scarce. In tropical areas the dew is sometimes so heavy that it can be collected in gutters. Yet meteorologists have done little toward measuring dew supply, and there is very little data on the subject. They have determined, however, that at London and at Tenbury in Worcestershire there is an annual fall of between an inch and one half, compared with annual rainfall of thirty-five inches.

THE dew wonder begins shortly after sunset on clear cool nights and continues until sunrise, unless clouds appear. As the earth and plantlife and other outdoor objects radiate heat and get cooler, moisture is condensed on them from the surrounding warmer atmosphere. This moisture is dew.

Aristotle was one of the first to observe that dew falls only on calm serene nights. He supposed that it fell like rain, and poets still

sing of the falling of the dew.

The moisture that appears on a glass tumbler containing iced water disproves the theory that dew falls, since the moisture is formed on the same principle as dew. The analogy is so perfect that scientists use the cool container method to determine the dew-point, the level to which the temperature must be reduced to form dew under various atmospheric conditions. This dew-point is a highly important factor in hygrometry, where it is used to measure the pressure and amount of humidity in the atmosphere.

The things dew does, and does not do, are striking. It thickly covers every leaf and blade that needs moisture for life, but does not form on dust, rocks, pebbles, or other barren formations that would not be benefited. It does not appear in cold damp climates where the air is saturated with moisture. In covering tender plant-shoots with moisture it shelters them from the cold that is forming the dew.

Dew answers the question of why clear, cool nights are followed by misty, foggy mornings. The dew becomes mist and fog when the sun rises and begins to warm the earth, causing the cool moisture to rise. On those nights when the temperature falls below 32° Fahrenheit the dew freezes and we have hoar-frost, with its beautifully-designed crystals.

DEWDROPS have incredible beauty. They form in surprisingly symmetrical fashion on leaves, blades of grass, and spiders' webs.

The most beautiful patterns appear on leaves that are covered with fine hairy surfaces, such as those of strawberry, blackberry, and clover.

One of the many dew mysteries is why it does not form on blades of grass that are broken. It may be because grass radiates its heat through the point of the blade, and because the dew only forms on the point of the blade. In other words, dew forms only at the point of radiation. The tiny diamond-like drop of dew grows until it becomes too heavy to keep its balance on the point of the blade. Then it rolls down, breaking into tiny drops as it goes. This is repeated until the grass blade is covered. The size of dewdrops varies greatly from one object to another, but those on any given object usually are of the same size.

Every dewdrop, wherever it may be, is a tiny mirror that reflects, upside down, whatever is within its range. Look into a dewdrop and you will see a minute picture of a piece of sky, the corner of a cloud, two or three pygmy trees, or the full moon in all its glory. Surely the night offers few spectacles than can compare with a spider-web that is bejewelled with hundreds of diamond dewdrops, each one holding within itself the reflection of the full moon.

DEW refreshes and brightens all living plantlife, and at the same time speeds up the decay of dead tissue, whether plant or animal. Both Pliny and Plutarch affirmed, and the people of the West Indies still believe, that human and animal corpses decay faster when exposed to moonlight. Since there is no heat in moonbeams reaching the earth, they have no effect on dead tissue. It is dew, not moonlight, that hastens decomposition.

The rotting effect of dew on dead tissue is used in the preparation of flax and hemp, whence the word 'dewret'—to ret or rot by exposure to dew and the sun. The fibres can then be extracted from the surrounding vegetable matter without breaking them.

Scientists have been fully as interested in dew as the poets. It was not, however, until the turn of the 19th century that a really scientific work on dew was produced. The celebrated classic on the subject is the *Essay on Dew*, by Dr William Charles Wells, first published in 1814. Dr Wells was physician to St Thomas's Hospital, London, and was the first investigator to prove that dew condenses

and does not fall. The *Essay* is a report on the long series of experiments he began in 1784, and it is not only of great scientific interest, but also a model of literary beauty.

Richard Jefferies also experimented with dew, and reported that dew is much less copious on hills than on plains, an observation that had already been made by both Plutarch and Aristotle. The reason is that the cooling of the air is greater on the plains than the hills.

There is, however, a notable exception to this rule. That is Mount Hermon in Galilee. Perhaps no other mountain is so generously drenched with dew. The dew is, in fact, Hermon's life. It waters and refreshes every living plant and tree upon it. The 'falling' of the dew on Mount Hermon was so famous in Biblical times that it is referred to figuratively in the 133rd Psalm as symbol of the blessing of brotherly concord.

As far back as man's memory reaches, the dew has always been heavy in Palestine and Egypt. There are thirty references to dew in the Old Testament. In many of the references dew is used as a synonym for blessing or good. The earliest dictionaries define dew as an emblem of dawn, or of morning freshness, purity, or vigour, as 'the dew of one's youth'. Shakespeare refers to the 'golden dew of sleep'.

KIPLING in The Five Nations sang the praise of one of the earth's most interesting mysteries:

... the dewpond on the height Unfed, that never fails.

Dewponds, still used for watering cattle on the chalk downs of Kent and Sussex, are relics of Neolithic man. Until very recently they had mystified scientists as well as laymen, because there is no visible source of their water supply. They stand on high ground into which brooks and streams cannot drain, yet they nearly always retain a fair quantity of water when the low-level ponds are empty. Because those ponds contain water when the rain-fed ponds are dry, it was long supposed that they must be replenished by the heavy dews on clear nights, hence their name. Recent investigations show that they are probably filled by the condensation of heavy fogs and mists that hang over them in the night when the clouds are heavy and low. But their poetic name still clings to them. Whatever their source may be, they can be depended upon to supply water when the ponds in the lowlands are empty. That is why Jack and Jill, and all their neighbours, went up the hill, to the dewponds, to fetch a pail of water.

Corpus Christi

(After the German of Schwab)

The banners flow. Familiar, ancient plaintunes, Like incense hovering, their savour bring To greet the altar. Does the spell enthrol me Yet, as it did? Do bells of childhood call me Back to the steps where joy was mine and spring?

The doors swing open. Slumbers the green garden, And fragrant towers the linden avenue; This way and that there flows a tender shining, Cornflowers, in consecrated garlands twining, Crowning the maiden-choir with gleams of blue.

Summer gazes on me, and I gaze yonder Where by the wall blossoms the elder-tree; In wells of blessed thought wavers a glory, The picture miracle unveils before me Of Life, that was, and is, and is to be.

ANNE PHILIP SMITH.

Ironfield Reclamation

CYRIL WILKINSON

A UNIQUE farming experiment is being undertaken in the English Midlands. In an attempt to restore derelict iron-ore workings to agriculture enterprising landowners and farmers are growing—soil. With the aid of fertilisers and herbage plants they seek to bring back life to land that has lain idle and useless for a generation. Never before has the problem been tackled, and over the hundreds of acres involved there are all the successes and heartbreaks of the method of trial and error.

For half-a-century the rich strata of ironore beneath the Midland fields have been worked at an increasingly steady rate to feed the steel mills of the country. In the early days of shallow workings, with labourers using nothing more than picks and wheelbarrows, quite often some of the land was returned to agriculture. But with the advent of giant dragline and powerful excavator, deeper and deeper went the workings, leaving gashes in the earth and spoil-banks so high that they were dubbed 'mountains of the moon'. For mile after mile rich, level acres of valuable agricultural land were transformed, whole farms, ranges of buildings, and sections of parishes frequently being swallowed up.

There seemed to be no hope of escape for the affected counties. Most of the old ore-bearing districts of Britain were worked out or yielding only small quantities of inferior ore. In one Midland country alone, however, Northamptonshire, proved reserves of new ore-bearing land were calculated to exceed 1500 acres, while the conjectured total was put at 52,000 acres. Every year 150 acres were being lost by farmers to ore-workings.

The process continued until, six years ago, more than 1500 acres of Northamptonshire's hill and dale lay gaunt and bare and stripped of its topsoil. Only an occasional bush or some tangled undergrowth relieved the

desolation. No longer did the ploughman homeward plod his weary way. Except for the scurrying of countless rabbits the land was silent.

THE year 1950, however, proved to be eventful. The world's largest excavator, with a boom so tall that it carried a red light as a danger warning to low-flying aircraft, was being employed, and workings were now so deep that public opinion was aroused. Landowners, the National Farmers' Union with the backing of the Press, and the County Councils pressed for Government action, which resulted, following personal inspections by Ministers, in the passing of a new Mineral Workings Act.

This Act laid down that in almost every case there ought to be some form of restoration by the mining companies. From that date onwards the land has been methodically restored. In the wake of the diggers-often as the diggers are operating-bulldozers and scrapers level the upturned land, leaving it in a condition and with a contour suitable for agricultural purposes. There remained, however, the great problem of restoring the 1500 acres or more which had been quarried before 1950. With remarkable co-operative spirit the owners, tenants, the County Council, and the Government agricultural advisory services began working together to make the land useful once again.

CAUTIOUSLY the experiments to restore the all-important topsoil started. As trial and error methods yield their secrets, so the acreage restored is increased yearly. Already several hundred acres have been bulldozed level and cleared of stone. Strangers to Northamptonshire must surely be doubtful

sometimes of the sanity of those scores of Polish women who are employed to pick the new crop—of stones. To gather 70 tons an acre is not unusual. Frequently the peace of the countryside is disturbed as huge limestone boulders are shattered by explosives, the only method of removal.

Men and machines then scatter nitrogen, potash, and phosphate over the ground to persuade either grass or clover mixture or the deep-rooted lucerne to give anything approaching a reasonable growth. Rarely is lime needed, although it is acknowledged to be essential to lucerne. Ironical as it might be, in almost every instance sufficient is found in the soil, a remainder of the limestone overburden that was thrown on the land during oreworking.

In most experiments it has been found that the reconditioned land provides some return within a year of being sown. For about the first three years the crops continue to give increasing productivity and then remain static in their yield, though all the time building up soil structure. Already there are encouraging signs from this pioneering work. The root systems of the plants, together with the herbage and the droppings of cattle or sheep, are literally creating a surface soil structure: in effect, soil is being 'grown' in the top few inches of the ground. Proudly, farmers will point to flocks of sheep grazing on fields that a year or two ago were counted lost to agriculture.

There is, however, still a long way to go before arable farming can be practised on a successful scale. Eagerly some of the plots have been ploughed—but with disappointing results. The scientists and farmers estimate that some ten to fifteen years will have to pass before ploughing will be possible. In their opinion arable crops are out of the question until some of the remaining stone has disintegrated naturally and more soil has formed.

WITH the spirit of good husbandry, enterprising farmers are taking the new land under their wing. Problems that have never before been faced often arise, particularly in wet weather. For example, unless herbage is well established, heavy rains tend

to give the soil a surface approaching that of over-diluted glue. Where cattle and sheep are on these fields their hooves tend to pad too much soil round the plants, so reducing the plants' chances of survival. The only means at present of overcoming this difficulty is for alternative fields to be available for stock during wet periods. An experiment, however, is now taking place to prevent this ponding. It is hoped that gypsum applied at a rate of four tons an acre will allow the water to percolate down from the surface.

Where cereals have been planted, the yield, as expected, has been light, though here a spring dressing of hoof or horn meal has brought improved crops. Sewage compost was tried in one test, but failure was reported. Tares and potatoes have been planted in some areas. The tares made a slow start and died back, but later in the season a second growth gave more encouraging results. The potatoes had been planted with a view to observing any possible effect on soil texture, but they suffered fifty per cent loss by suffocation in wet weather. Survivors, however, made a growth of up to fifteen inches, though few tubers were formed, and then mainly of no more than chat size.

VERY encouragement, financial and other, EVERY encouragement, in a serious property is given by the Ministry of Agriculture, undertaking Fisheries, and Food to farmers undertaking this experimental work in restoring land fertility. From the outset the full burden of outlay has not fallen on owner or tenant The Ministry allocates financial farmers. assistance out of the Ironstone Restoration Fund, set up under the Act with a view to meeting the cost of labour, seeds, fertilisers, drainage, fencing, and water supplies. No hard-and-fast rules about these grants are laid down. The amount of grant depends entirely on the circumstances of each particular case.

It may be that the recovered lands will not be ready for normal farming for another twenty years, but at least the future is brighter than it was a few years ago. It is now certain that in time these scarred fields of the Midlands will again be serving the country—and as part of 'England's green and pleasant land'.



Who Is My Enemy?

PHILIP DE CARTERET

HE hard bright West Indian sunshine smacked down on the whitewashed walls of the office buildings and shivered off the corrugated-iron roofs and the silver-painted fuel-tanks. A faint breeze tugged gently at the palm fronds over the road, causing them to wave and to pirouette in the heat-haze. In the near-by sugarfields the cane arrows swaved backwards and forwards, seeming to bow courteously to each other, until distance blended them into the shifting green horizon. In the factory yard there was a strange unusual hush, so that each snatch of conversation, each snort from the exhaust in the Diesel powerhouse, each sudden shriek of a motor-horn on the main road, sounded in isolation. The normal mad symphony of sound and echo had been shut down with the engines.

By stretching forward and leaning across his desk, he could peer out through the open window that commanded a view of the factory yards and the workshop area—the yards spreadeagled with railway tracks, the machines still and silent. The almost empty railway-lines weaved their normal patterns, snaking in and out of each other in a myriad of crossings; but now they looked dully rusted, and sterile. Here and there an empty or half-emptied freight-car stood abandoned, appearing

strangely out of place and derelict. No fussy stuttering Diesels with their long trail of sugar-trucks were creeping down the tracks, to shake his wooden office; no thunder of escaping steam and oddly-contrasted falsetto whistle would announce the arrival of the heavy steam locomotives, and prepare him for the temporary blacking-out of sun and sky as the train hammered by, sending a thick belch of grey smoke between his office window and the calm distance.

He put down the slide-rule on the desk, lit a cigarette, and then heaved himself up on to his feet and edged over close to the window. He stood there, looking down but not yet singling out any special area of vision. At once he could feel the eyes of the crowd coming up to meet him, and he sensed the muffled shuffling of hundreds of feet. Somewhere, out of sight, a man laughed, and there was no humour in the sound. It was a laugh bred of malice, a wail of derision that started high in the mouth and tailed off into nothingness.

Below him were standing small groups of strikers. They sprawled untidily all over the foreground like a shabby army of rag-dolls on a nursery floor. Black faces, brown-skinned faces, coffee-coloured faces, but always the flash of the white teeth and the lifted eyes.

The groups stood, sat, or sprawled, taking whatever shelter they could find from the inquiring sun. Here a little hand of dungareeclad mechanics chatted sleepily as they draped themselves about a silent lathe at the very doorway of the machine-shop. There a gang of East Indian labourers squatted in the shadow of a near-by office, old felt-hats the uniform head-covering of both men and women as they sat in a circle of silence, only using their long weeding-hoes to lever themselves up into a more upright position from which to take a look at any unusual movement further down the yard. From time to time some man would ease out from his own group. strut out into the sunshine, and move over to join another party of strikers. He would emerge from the cover of the shade like a shabby butterfly, gorgeous yet faded in a coloured jockey-cap, a highly-decorative nylon shirt that had seen many better days, and a much-patched, yet still ragged, pair of blue jeans. As he left his group, catcalls and humorous remarks would be hurled after him. and, happy to be in the limelight, he would stop dramatically and turn to shout back. accompanying his words with much waving of hands and pantomime. Nothing in the yard and no person there moved with any speed, or with any set purpose. Routine was dead. The men had already been on strike for nearly two months.

To the Whiteman, looking down on the yard from his office window, this period of unsettlement seemed interminable. For over seven weeks, seven days of each of those weeks, his job had been restricted to standing in his office and just keeping a watch on these same men. Nobody could know better than he that their pockets must have been empty for some time now, and that their bellies must be empty of all but the barest essentials for maintaining life. The men below his window were close to starvation, and the hunger angered them doubly as fathers of hungry families.

At the beginning of the strike, brash with overconfidence of early victory in their struggle for recognition, they had continued to live as though they were still at work, and just at first they had been able to make bold and brassy demands upon the local storekeepers in their villages—better to give credit than to effect no sales at all. As the weeks had slipped

by, so credit had slipped by too, and, already, scavenging and thieving had been added to the evils of pre-harvest reaping, in an effort to procure enough food.

During the last ten days the tension had risen considerably. Early on in the strike the men had continued to greet him with the usual catch-phrases, and with a smile or the touch of a forelock. To them the strike had at first seemed an amusing game. It seemed splendid to challenge the hitherto unquestionable authority of the great Company; but there was no considerable ill-feeling directed against individuals, and at first the idle yards had echoed with bursts of happy, thoughtless laughter, and had been littered with fruit-peel and empty soft-drink bottles.

That, of course, had been in the early days of the strike, when the cry had been for better working conditions in general, and for Union recognition. There had followed the not unusual deadlock, when the employers had insisted on a return to work before any negotiations were started, and the men behind the strikers had counterblasted with a considerable stepping-up of the workers' demands. From then on, both sides had sat back waiting for the first signs of a crack in the armour of the opponent.

Now, over seven weeks since the strike began, there was little enough laughter: during the last few days there had even been rumours of impending acts of violence. Over the weekend crude slogans that the men had chalked up on the factory walls had taken on a much more sinister tone, and racial and colour questions had been introduced into the matter for the first time. Then, last Monday, the staff engineers had been made the targets of loudlyshouted jeers and insults as they crossed the yard on the way to their offices, and it had become necessary to call for a police guard on the power-house. And, to-day, a gang of contractor's men, who had entered the yard to remove some bagged sugar for local consumption, had been threatened and abused by the strikers and had been forced to beat a strategic withdrawal under police protection.

THE telephone-bell shrilled on his desk, and the man at the window moved away and picked up the dusty black enamel instrument. The call was from a friend in the local town and was an invitation to tennis that evening. He agreed to play, and then found himself

aimlessly continuing the conversation for some minutes. It was to him a pleasant relief to maintain this thin connection with the outside world. His friend, in a busy town only six or seven miles away, would be sitting at his office desk without any of this nerve-straining tension tearing at him: there, in the town, no ear would be half-cocked against the first sound of any unusual noises. So it was not until he had prolonged the conversation to the limit that decency would permit that he replaced the instrument in its cradle and returned to his watch at the window.

No sooner was he there than he was again uncomfortably conscious of the sudden uplifting of eyes, and of the shuffling of feet in the dust. As he watched, three or four of the men below pulled down their hat-brims to hide their features, and it interested him to see the custom of years overriding the brazenness of the brave new world that the workers were now creating.

Then a noise of shouting echoed across the yard from somewhere inside the factory, and those of the crowd nearest to the factory entrance moved off in that direction and disappeared from view. Meanwhile, in the middle of the yard one man suddenly erupted from the crowd and started to hurl invective at the office blocks. A scraping of chairs in the adjoining office told the watcher that his office staff would now be lining the windows, and adding their far too obvious neutrality to his embarrassment. He continued to stand there looking out, very still, and very much alone.

A sound of hasty movement from almost directly below his window caused him to bend forward, and he was just in time to see three men dash into the cover of a firehose shed below and a little to the left of his office. Once there, they stood quietly, their chests heaving after the sprint across the sun-laden path, the sweat making great dark patches on their soiled working-shirts. Looking up, their eyes met those of the Whiteman above. All three stood there for some moments poised in all defiance, saying nothing, but just staring at him. Then they deliberately turned their backs on the authority, and unconcernedly sat down below the hose at the back of the hut.

In the factory the noise had already died down, and out in the yard the shouting and cursing had stopped. Hardly a worker was now in sight. The crowd seemed to have slipped away to cover, leaving an eerie silence, a silence that, coming so soon after the sudden violent disturbance, was full of tension. The Whiteman stepped back from the window. He had no idea of what was going on, nor was anybody likely to be able to tell him. He thought: 'I wonder what in God's name the crowd is up to now. I wonder, too, what those three sons of bitches are doing in the firehose shed down there. Why should they come rushing here, close to my office, just when nobody else seems to want to be anywhere near? What good does it do for me to sit around here like a damn fool, sweating it out and doing nothing?' Then, realising that he could do nothing better, he shrugged his shoulders, wiped his brow with his handkerchief and sat down at his desk again. Picking up the daily paper he started to read it in a half-hearted sort of way.

DOWN in the firehose hut the three men were regaining their breath after their run. Two of them were carpenters by trade and the third was a welder. Both of the carpenters were very black negroes; but the welder, a man approaching middle-age, was a cross of negro and East Indian. All three had crouched down on the plank that served to hold the hose clear of any damp that might settle on the hut floor during the rainy season. The welder took out the stub of a cheap cigarette from the band of his battered felt-hat and a box of matches from the breast-pocket of his old blue overalls. He cupped his hands as he pulled at the damp stub and the sallow palms and broken, grimed nails curled round the thin waft of greyish smoke. Neither he nor the other two men were at all sure of themselves or of their right to be in the hut. and all three sent swift glances to the windows above them.

After a few minutes, as nothing further had happened, they started to regain confidence, and settled themselves comfortably enough into the back of the hut. The smoker pulled hard at his cigarette stub, drawing in deep lungfuls of smoke and exhaling it with a faint whistling sound. The stale and raw tobacco of the cheap local brand was rankly strong, and almost at once he felt his head swimming. The smoke only made him more aware of a dreadful emptiness in his belly, and more conscious that the emptiness seemed to have been there for an interminable time. His two companions, he could see, were already lost in open-eyed sleep, leaving him the only one

at active grips with their immediate present.

Then the noise of the telephone-bell ringing in the office above came as an alarm to him, so that he shifted his position and retired further into the shelter. Squatting there under the shed, he longed desperately to return to the factory, not to the idle, silent shell that was the factory to-day, but to the huge rumbling mechanical monster which had always bemused and drugged him into the only sense of peace and security that he had ever experienced.

He remembered so well his early days, when he was fresh from the village, and the noise and bustle of his new working-place had been enough to terrify him. How his callow fear had caused him to stand idle, staring wide-eyed at the machinery, until a passing foreman had handed him a forcible reminder of the fact that he had not been brought here just to look on.

During the years that had passed since that memorable day, he had come to find an almost animal comfort in the warmth and noise of the moving machinery. The factory was, for him, both the safer and the more orderly of the two worlds that he inhabited—the one during his working-hours, when he was surrounded by the friendly clatter of the mills, the pleasant smell of well-oiled machinery, and the unfrightening impersonality of his employers: the other during his off-time, tossed by the jealousies and petty feuds that made up village life and in constant fear of the gamblers and wasters who bullied and tyrannised his hapless people.

Even his sudden flight from the back of the neighbouring pump-house to the firehouse hut had been brought about by the desire to escape from the loud-mouthed ranting of two members of his wife's family who were bent on causing further trouble amongst the strikers. At night, out in the villages, his brothers-inlaw bullied, extorted, blackmailed, secure in the knowledge that their victims would not have the courage to face a night walk, through the dark traces cut in the cane, to the distant police-station. In the factory they had, until now, always worked with more subtlety. Like the black scavenging corbeaux that circled high in the blue sky above, they had waddled out of sight of their kill and had croaked in distant reverence whenever a staff engineer had walked by them; but they had always flopped back again at once, to tear at the corpses, as soon as he was out of hearing. Lately, during the

present crisis, they had been tempted into showing more of their true colours; and he knew that the Whitemen were by now aware of their characters. He had no wish to stand contaminated by his family connection, and he had escaped from their company, hoping not to invite any further trouble upon himself by becoming associated with them and their rantings in the minds of his employers.

Again he heard the sounds of movement from the office above, and a moment later he saw that the Whiteman was back at the window. Flinching instinctively, he drew further back into the shadows, and sat there cursing the misfortune that had directed his footsteps from the frying-pan into this fire. He could feel the blue eyes of the Whiteman bearing down upon him, even through the corrugated-iron roof of the hut, and he began to pour with the sweat of fear in a passion of misery and bitterness.

To him it now seemed certain that all of his long years of honest work were to stand for nothing. He could picture the cold deliberation of the man at the window, who would by now have marked him down as a shirker and trouble-maker, marked him down as yet another member of a particularly troublesome family from a bad village. At any moment now he might expect a summons to that upstairs office, a summons that could only have one ending-his discharge from the Company compounds. In his anger and frustration at the rank injustice of it all, he found a new hatred that almost blinded him in its sheer physical fury. The silent watcher in that office above became to him a bloody tool, primed to wrench him from the warm womb that had been his workplace for so many long, happy years. The indignities of his home-life, the bullying interference of his wife's family, the shrewishness of his wife, and the tearing hunger in his empty belly, all compounded at that moment into one basic loathing-hatred, red passionate hatred, for the Whiteman standing by the window above him.

THE European stepped back from the window. He was wishing desperately that the three men would move away from the firehose hut. He could not see why their presence should worry him as it did, but he knew himself well enough to recognise the strain they were putting on his frayed nerves.

Just for a moment he considered sending down a messenger to tell them to get back into the factory, but he decided that his doing so might only start some further complications, so he walked across the office and pushed his way into the general office next door, where there was at least the hearteningly day-to-day normality of the clicking of typewriters and plopping of adding-machines. He still did not know why those three men down in the firehose hut should seem to him to be the enemy, but, even after he had started to discuss some figures with his chief book-keeper, he found himself unable to forget the vague menace of their presence below.

The welder had continued to watch the window from his corner of the hut, and had seen the Whiteman leave it and move away. Then he heard the office door open and shut. Hearing the ominous slam of the door, he thought: 'Oh God, he does go fetch de police, and den I done.' Unreasoning fear clamped down on him and in panic he leapt to his feet and fled through the bright sunshine. leaving

his stringless shoes behind him on the floor of the hut. He ran as though pursued by devils, as he strained to put yet another yard in between the merciless Whiteman at the window and himself. As he ran, he was sobbing between his teeth: 'Oh God, mak dat man dead. Just mak he all dead.'

The other two men, startled by his headlong flight, roused themselves in momentary alarm. and then began to laugh as they watched his running figure. One of them picked up the shoes and threw them carelessly out into the vard. They lay there a few steps away from each other. One shoe lay on its side with the torn tongue protruding into the dust as if parched with an unslakable thirst. The other fell jauntily against a small pile of bricks, and stood there looking very much at ease with the sunshine pouring down through a jagged hole in the rubber sole. From inside the factory buildings there came a sudden solitary shout of laughter that increased quickly into a vast roar of derision, then everything once again relapsed into a sleepless silence.

Angel of Doom

The Great Amaxosa Delusion

F. ADDINGTON SYMONDS

ONE morning, just as dawn was breaking in all its golden splendour over the South African veld, a slim Amaxosa girl went to draw water from a little stream that flowed past her home. It was a routine job, one that she carried out every day; but on this day, in May 1856, something happened that caused her to drop her pail and go stumbling back to her father's kraal, where she clung to him in a state of gibbering terror. 'Spirits from the dead!' she gabbled. 'Strange men—by the river! They are calling for you!'

Old Mhlakaza, steeped in superstition like

all his tribe, followed his daughter back to the stream, where he saw a group of figures, human in appearance, yet having that about them which was not of this world.

'Your nation has been too long under the dominion of the white man,' the strange visitors told him. 'The time has come for you to set yourselves free. We bring you news of a paradise in which you and all the tribes will be lords of Africa, if you do as we command.'

The orders were clear and simple. The people were to purify themselves with the usual ceremonies and offer an ox in sacrifice

to the dead. They were then to destroy all their cattle and every grain of corn. Nothing whatever was to be left in the land in the way of livestock or food. They were to strip themselves naked, throw themselves on the mercy of the god of their forefathers.

In return for this act of faith, there would come forth on an appointed day myriads of cattle, fatter and more beautiful than those destroyed. Great fields of corn, ripe for harvest, would instantly appear. The dead themselves would arise, trouble and sickness would vanish, and youth and beauty be bestowed upon all alike. Unbelievers and the hated white man would utterly perish and the Bantu would reign unchallenged over the land that had always belonged to them.

THE message was hailed with joy, and the tribes, in blind loyalty to their chiefs, carried out the work of total destruction. Cattle were slaughtered by the thousand, vast fields of corn mowed down and burnt, while night was turned into day with the blaze of the ever-mounting fires. Great kraals were feverishly made ready for the promised new stocks, huge skin bags prepared for the milk that was to be more plentiful than water.

Then, exhausted, hungry, and homeless, they gathered on the eve of the appointed day to await their reward—the coming of the promised paradise. Famished with hunger and thirst though they were, their faces were alight with a sacred joy, their eyes ablaze with a mighty faith.

Dawn came at last, throwing a silver sheen upon the mountain-peaks and bathing kopjes and valleys in a flood of light. They watched the sun climb slowly into the heavens . . . Perhaps, after all, it was midday when the great event would happen . . . Perhaps it was to be at sunset they told themselves, less convincingly, as the great golden orb sank into the west . . . And then, as the blue curtain of darkness fell again, they stood speechless and bewildered. Nothing had happened. It was still the same world—the world in which they had lost everything, down to the last morsel of food, the last drop of water.

BLANK despair seized them. They began to question, to quarrel among themselves. The quarrel grew to a riot, from which a handful of wild and naked fugitives escaped and somehow reached the frontier, to throw themselves, exhausted, upon the mercy of the British.

Their famished people had gone mad, they said. Brother was fighting brother, father was killing son, for the few scraps and shreds they could still pick up here and there. It was a nightmare of horror back there.

The British did what they could, sending doctors and supplies. Everywhere they found men, women, and children dead, dying, or in the last stages of hunger and thirst. Under a single tree were fifteen to twenty skeletons, and charred human bones discovered in many a pot showed to what grim extremes the desperate people had gone.

Of those who still lived, a continuous stream began to be shepherded into special encampments—living skeletons all of them, naked and eaten up with dysentery, fever, and the hideous dropsy of starvation. Among them was the girl, Nongquasi. Still lissom and beautiful, she seemed almost untouched by the horrors that had stricken the others. To their inquiries she returned always the same answer—the spirits had come, they had spoken, they had promised. And as to why that promise was not fulfilled—well, it was because someone had blundered. If they had not, it would all have come to pass as it was predicted.

And the aftermath? Of the various tribes that had suffered, one had decreased from 31,000 to 3700; another had only 6500 out of nearly 23,000. The official returns for that tragic year showed a total decrease in the native population from 105,000 to 38,000, with at least another 25,000 marked down as unaccounted for.

One fact alone stands out as a stark reality against all the fog of superstition and legend. The Amaxosa nation was broken for many years, if not for ever. It had sacrificed itself on the altar of a faith that turned out to be one of the greatest examples of self-deception ever recorded in human history.

In the Heavenly Mountains A Visit to the Kalmuks of the Tien Shan

Colonel P. T. ETHERTON

WE were sitting in the mess verandah one night listening to someone who had just returned from Central Asia, that land of lands for adventurous travellers. He was telling us about the Tien Shan, or Heavenly Mountains, home of quaint tribes and mighty hunters, who seemed to live a carefree life that came near to that of the milk and honey one of Biblical fame. This idyllic land lay right in the heart of Asia, where China still holds shadowy dominion over a last remnant of old Tartary, one of the untouched Edens left upon earth.

The chance meeting led to my going into Central Asia, where I was to turn back the pages of history and see Tartary, the very name of which once shook the rest of mankind and ever since has tinctured world imagination, conjuring up the fabulous, the fantastic,

and the dangerous.

The Heavenly Mountains are the home of a section of the Kalmuks, reputed descendants of Genghis Khan, the Mongol fire-eater of the 13th century, who made the civilised world tremble and always did things in a big way. Genghis was the personification of the yellow magic of Tartary, the atom-bomb of the past that might explode anywhere, and once held Asia and part of Europe in thrall.

Later on Tamerlane, the lame and terrible Tartar, built his pyramids, but they were of skulls, and he turned Samarkand into a legend of silk. After the decline of the Mongols in the 14th century, part of them settled in Russian territory, but in 1771, after a stay of about four hundred years, they decided to quit and move eastwards and find a promised land. This celebrated journey has been immortalised by De Quincey in his 'Revolt of the Tartars'. It took eight months, but the Kalmuks won through, and gained the borders of the Chinese Empire, where the Chinese took them

in and shooed off their pursuers, leaving the Kalmuks free to settle down in their new

home to live happily ever after.

These Kalmuks, who are Buddhists and wear their hair in short pigtails, are of the old stock, the die-hards, who always saw to it that, as far as possible, it was the other fellow who died, the nomads with sheer backs to their heads and without pity. Tartars they had always been, and Tartars they remained. They gave a word of opprobrium to our language and a placename to Asia. They lived tough, drinking fermented mare's milk, which is as potent as Scotch whisky. Moonfaced killers, they found a place in the sun, as they deserved to do, after the incredible hardships of their retreat from Russia. Out of half-a-million who started on the historic trek, only one hundred and twenty thousand reached the Heavenly Mountains. But they turned the nightmare into a dream, and I shall ever look back with delight to the three months I spent in their company.

IN the Heavenly Mountains I found old Tartary in a new and blissful setting, but the place, like all desirable things, is not easy to get at. Catching a Tartar is a synonym for difficulty, and it is almost as hard to reach the

Heavenly Mountains.

After several months of hard going from India, during which I traversed Hunza, where the chieftain claims descent from Alexander the Great, I arrived within sight of the Tien Shan, following a track which would lead us into the Great Yulduz Valley, the home of the Khan of the Kalmuks, those reputed descendants of Genghis Khan. I was only two or three days' ride from the Khan's capital. The great moment was approaching.

I was gaining contact with the far-famed

legendary Genghis.

One night I camped by a group of Kalmuk auls, circular constructions on a lattice framework, with a hole in the top to let out the smoke from the fire inside. I had dinner with the Kalmuks here, and when I told them that I had come all this way to see their Khan they went all out to help me. They were a jovial, crowd, and I gathered they were going to show me the way to the Khan's capital, where he lived in pavilioned splendour. I also gathered that these born, dare-devil riders were going to show me how to get a move on.

When I asked how far it was to the capital, they were a trifle vague as to distance, but contented themselves by saying that it was a great way off. The leader of the Kalmuk party offered to act as guide and suggested we should set off next day, which we did shortly

after dawn at a breakneck pace.

Now, I had been a cowboy in the Canadian Northwest and had served in Kitchener's Fighting Scouts in the South African War, a hard-bitten crowd of rough-riders if ever there was one. I soon found out that these Kalmuks were more than on a par with them.

All day we pressed on, securing fresh horses at the different camps on our route, pausing only to ease the strain on ourselves and our horses and to take a scratch meal from food which we carried with us. Just after night fell we forded a wide and terrifying river in

full flood.

At last, when it was already past one o'clock, we emerged from a narrow opening in the hills. Below us in the moonlight stretched a wide and level valley, in which I made out a large encampment of auls. We pulled up our horses. 'The home of the Khan,' said the guide, with a wave of the hand. I looked along the valley. It was about a mile in width, the low hills enclosing it on either side. I could hardly believe that we had at last arrived at the romantic capital in search of which I had come so far and endured so much. There stood the tents, dark and ghostly, casting shadows in the moonlight.

The place was so remote that I had the impression of arriving in a newly-discovered land. The camp that lay before me had a definite touch of phantasy, seeming to remove it from the realm of reality. I had a feeling of strange excitement and expectancy, just as if I had stepped back into the Middle Ages and was journeying with Marco Polo. The thrill

of the moment will remain in my memory for ever.

Slowly we moved towards the tents, of which there must have been about a thousand. I was wondering where we should find a night's lodging and what the next day, or perhaps that night, would bring forth. We went on at a walking-pace to the edge of the camp. Here a new danger threatened, bringing us to an abrupt standstill. It was the baying and fierce barking of dogs; and then, like a tidal wave, the animals descended on us and I saw what gigantic dogs they were as they dashed up to challenge us.

It was now two o'clock in the morning. We had been nineteen hours in the saddle. We had arrived, but it looked as though the dogs were going to turn the tables on us. In Britain we talk of mastiffs and others of the big dog kind, extolling their size and ferocity. These Kalmuk creatures looked as large as small Shetland ponies, and the noise they made beggars description. There were at least fifty of them. They were real disturbers of the peace in that quiet valley of the Heavenly Mountains, and as guardians of the camp they were determined to fulfil their trust. If we had to tackle these enemies, I did not fancy the encounter. Prudence told me that the best defence was to keep on horseback.

The Kalmuks with me did their best to appease the dogs, but they might as well have tried to cleave the pillar of Asoka. We were intruders, the dogs seemed to say, and they didn't like the look of us. Then, suddenly, from behind an aul loomed a figure that swayed in the darkness. It was a drunken Kalmuk, who had evidently been sleeping-off the effects of the night before. He clutched the aul for support, nodded his head gaily, clapped his hands at the dogs, and then made the air thick with Kalmuk oaths. The dogs drew back; they were accustomed to him, but woe betide the stranger who might venture here alone—and on foot.

Under the direction of our drunken friend we found an empty aul and with the man between us and the dogs, who seemed strangely obedient to his will, we gingerly descended from our mounts and slipped inside. Shortly afterwards the dogs gave in and, shooed off by the Kalmuk, left us in peace. We were dead tired and turned in after tethering the horses, being too weary to trouble about supper. We slept, and did not wake until the morning light was coming through the chinks of the

aul. Outside the horses were neighing and the booming of a gong, as in Genghis's time, told everyone that daylight had officially begun.

I GOT up and looked outside. I saw a forest of tents. This was the real thing—a glimpse of old Tartary. Men and women were moving about, horses were prancing up and down, and everyone was getting busy with their various jobs.

Presently the Khan's prime minister arrived to wish us welcome. He was cordial and had the quiet dignity and charm of the best type of diplomat. He apologised for my unofficial reception, which was really my own fault, since of course he had not expected me in the middle of the night. He took me to a spacious aul, about twenty-four feet in diameter, which was to be my home. It was hung with embroideries, and the floor was spread with carpets from Bokhara and Persia; priceless rugs they were, with piles of cushions and what we should call eiderdowns, all stuffed with wool, with silk coverings and embroidery, each a masterpiece of workmanship. One or two small tables in exquisite lacquer-work completed the furnishings. The minister then went away to announce my arrival to the Khan, soon after which breakfast was served-strips of tender mutton fried in fat, eggs fried and boiled, with tasty flour cakes. There was tea, worthy of Peking, served in a choice porcelain bowl.

I was outside taking stock again of the camp, when the prime minister came to conduct me to the Khan. With him were half-a-dozen of the noisy fiends who had greeted us the night before. They wore scarlet spiked collars as a sign of their royal connection. They were the giant version of our sheepdogs. A couple of them could tackle a lion, and would have caused the biggest tiger I have ever shot to think twice.

I took my followers with me, arrayed in their best. Before me walked a retainer holding aloft my Chinese visiting-card, a strip of red paper ten inches by four with my name written on it in flourishing Chinese characters. The whole place was en fête. We passed through dense lines of people, all keen to see the visitor from afar. Trombones played notes like catcalls. It was a day in the life of the Kalmuks, and if Marco Polo had been there he would have said it was even so in his time.

Pursuing our triumphant way, we came to a

large square where the Khan lived in tented glory. His tents and those of the household were as big as marquees, made of camel-hair and with three-feet-wide strips of red felt running over them north and south and east and west. In the centre of the square were the royal apartments, at the entrance of which I was received by a chamberlain and ushered inside. Never have I seen anything to compare with the carpets inside that tent. They were of every shade, and the choicest productions of Bokhara and Persia. The sides of the aul, the diameter of which was about thirtyfive feet, were hung with red cloth relieved here and there by embroideries. The combination of these, and the gorgeous rugs and carpets on the floor, made a blaze of colour in comparison with which the young Khan looked almost anæmic.

The Khan greeted me with great cordiality and then motioned me to a seat at his side on a small dais. Grouped around us were the Khan's followers, wearing long cloaks like dressing-gowns, fastened at the waist by a belt. Beneath were trousers stuffed into riding-boots. Their hats were broad-brimmed felt affairs with streamer ribbons hanging from the back. They carried riding-whips, were born riders, and looked the part. This was a scene which would have been unchanged for Genghis Khan, the overlord of all the horseriding Mongols from the Amur westwards, when they rode out of High Asia on their bid for world dominion.

The Khan was intensely interested in my journey to his domain and asked how many days it would be to England. I told him at least one hundred. This astonished him, for a Kalmuk visualises all-out riding at seventy to a hundred miles a day, and to him it seemed a long way. Then I added that he could go by rail, but, as he had never seen a railway, this did not convey much, so we returned to the horse, the horse on which his ancestors rode to fame. At this stage one of the Khan's retainers who had been to Russia enlightened him as to the railway. I was grateful to him. for he got me out of an awkward situation, as I did not want the Khan to have any doubts as to my statements, by which I might have dropped a peg or two in his estimation.

When we had satisfactorily adjusted the distance to England, he went on to ask about my personal possessions. A patriarch himself, even at twenty-four, he wanted to know what was my own worldly state, my houses, oxen,

horses, and so on-in fact, everything that was mine. I was ready for this and put myself in the Kalmuk's position, for to a Kalmuk community life would be impossible without herds of cattle and horses. These people still live in the days, not of medievalism, but of the Old Testament, when a leader was judged as much by the flocks that surrounded him as by the number of his followers. By annexing, for the time being, my father's stock, we settled this vital question to my host's satisfaction, and then he inquired what I had in the way of houses and real estate. These delightful people have great respect for parents, so I brought in father again and, to make up for my other shortcomings, told the Khan that he had a mansion, and that in this fabulous house there was room for many of the Khan's great marquees to be stowed away in corners.

We chatted on gaily, and then I went back to my aul, where later in the day I held a

return reception.

Time was passing pleasantly among these people whose forebears had accomplished immortal deeds, great riders and hunters that they were, unsurpassed on hill, and plain, and field. Anyone could see that these men and their horses were undeniably one; they could do anything they liked on horseback, including sleeping there. It was clear they came of a fighting stock and had developed through the generations into the perfect product.

Like the rest of the world the Kalmuks love a wedding, which here is at once a glamorous ceremony, a cross-country race, and a tournament, for the bride, especially if she is a beauty, has to fight half-a-dozen or more suitors. On the wedding-day she is finally wooed and won on horseback. She leads off at full gallop, arrayed in all her best finery. This is the big moment of her life, as, Daphne-like, she flies in this race from the Apollos, among whom there is always one she is keen on, the one she will yield herself to.

One day I attended the wedding of the belle of the capital. I have seen weddings up and down and round the world, but nothing to compare with this Kalmuk affair. We made our way to the ground in a blaze of sunshine and a buzz of happy laughter, for everyone was at the top of their form.

A space about half-a-mile square had been cleared. At twelve noon the girl and ten would-be bridegrooms came on to the ground.

The bride wore an exquisitely-embroidered cloak of many colours, fastened at the waist by a golden sash. Baggy trousers of white silk, tucked into embroidered top-boots, completed the outer part of her dress, and, with a porkpie hat studded with turquoises, bracelets of rubies on her wrists, and a turquoise necklace, she looked a picture. She had a confident, happy expression, good health and high spirits radiated from her. She turned towards the cheering crowds, holding the reins of her high-spirited charger, smiling and bowing with expressions of delight and gratitude.

The women amongst the company of thousands were dressed in the latest Kalmuk fashions. How wonderful were their cloaks, each a marvel of colour and design. Their embroidered caps, like skull-caps, with tassels of coloured silks hanging down, were placed at jaunty angles on attractive heads. The local hairdressers had been busy for some days; dressmakers had been working round the clock for this event. All the women wore high-heeled riding-boots reaching halfway to the knees, and each one carried a riding-whip.

To level matters up and give the girl a fair chance as against her suitors, she carried a rawhide whip, with which she could, and did, ride off the undesirables. The girl came forward, superb in her youthful beauty. The ten hopefuls were lined up behind her, each holding the reins of his restive mount. The girl looked around and with a wave of the hand swung into the saddle. As she settled down, tucking in the skirts of her robe, she turned and gave a dreamy expression of love to a stalwart young Kalmuk who was one of the starters. I was watching her keenly and saw a smile playing over her lips. It was all a matter of seconds, but at once I knew that this fine-looking young fellow was the favourite, and instinctively and metaphorically I put my money on him.

All the field were now in the saddle, the girl half-a-dozen paces ahead of the centre, the horses champing and stamping like runners at the Grand National. The signal was given and away went the bride, with would-be grooms in full cry. They were going flat out, when, some hundreds of yards down, the girl pulled up, a halt that would have sent many a rider flying over the horse's head, but she sat there like a centaur, as the field, not expecting this, thundered past in a mad gallop. They swung round in wide circles, converging on the target. In and out amongst these cavaliers the girl

IN THE HEAVENLY MOUNTAINS

darted, and not one of them seemed able to get near enough to take her by the waist. The enthusiasm of the crowd was terrific. I myself was quite carried away by the amazing scene before me. It was a joy to watch the horsemanship and thrills of this game, a sight that Olympia would have been delighted to acclaim.

This girl was a daughter of the gods and she rode like a winged being. The wings of love and her superb horsemanship lent her a distinction, so that she was as one inspired. And then one of the hopefuls came quite close to her; the two were side by side in a breakneck gallop, compared to which the Derby would have seemed a tame affair. They were neck and neck, the pace was terrific, whilst the thunder of hooves and the roars of applause shook the very ground. Here were these people displaying feats of horsemanship that no trick-rider of Europe or the Americas could have surpassed.

I began to have doubts for the favourite; he was away on the off-side, going all out, waiting for the moment to close in. But this other fellow was dangerously close—surely, I thought, he's going to get her! Then came the climax. The girl was riding magnificently, not crouching like a jockey, but upright, and with complete control of her horse. She knew what she was doing; she had command of the situation.

Suddenly, riding with her left hand on the reins, she raised her right with that rawhide whip, and with a tremendous blow struck the youth across the face. I winced involuntarily. The fellow reined in his horse. He swayed, and I thought he was going to collapse, but he pulled himself together, and then realising, like the doomed gladiator in the Roman arena, that he was finished, he rode slowly off the field.

By this time the girl and the other lads had dodged and jinked, wheeling about and making their clever horses do anything they wanted. Slapdash they went up and down the field. Such a sight I had never seen and in all human probability shall never see again. And when at last the right man got the inside place, and ranged alongside the girl, she led him such a chase and eluded him so often, teasing him as all women will, that I wondered how the thing was possible without many active rehearsals. Finally, she handed over the whip to him. They were now at the far end of the ground. The losers trotted away. The winner with his bride rode slowly down the centre of the ground to where they had started from, greeted with boundless enthusiasm by the enormous crowd. Later the marriage ceremony took place and the bride went off to her new home.

SUCH were my days in the Heavenly Mountains, days spent in hunting with the Kalmuks, and listening to their stories round the camp-fire. My stay was all too short. The day came when I had to pack up and leave the happy valleys where the food was good and plentiful and there are no cinemas, newspapers, post-offices, or, as yet, motor transport. Only the ideal life, the land of milk and honey outside a harassed world, amidst unsurpassed scenery, the land where you meet the smiling and cheery gesture at every turn.

It was a glorious morning when I left. Outside the birds were calling and from an adjacent aul came the soft notes of a homemade guitar. It seemed to be the reflection of the happy and simple way of life in this idyllic spot, and I felt unwilling to leave and go back to the turmoil that awaited me.

Spring Song

Cherry blossom, almond blossom, Pink against the sky, Did you trap a sunrise cloud That went drifting by? Apple blossom, hawthorn blossom, White as bridal gown, Did you hide a little when Snow came tumbling down?

Chestnut tip and willow curlings, Every young green thing, Did you find and keep for me All my dreams of Spring?

B. R. GIBBS.



A Brahman's Honour

A. G. P. PULLAN

OMTI was very bored. She was sixteen, pretty and full of life, and she was very fond of her brother Janki and was not illtreated by his wife. As long as she could remember, she had played with her brother Debi. But now life seemed to her very blank. She had no hope of a husband or children of her own, for she was an orthodox Brahman and a widow, to whom remarriage was for-She could hardly remember her husband, and her marriage was a dream. She was only nine when a boy whom she did not know, dressed in fantastic clothes and with a painted face, took her hand and led her seven times round the sacred hearth and sat by her on the bridal seat. There was shouting and singing, and she got very sleepy and went back to her brother's house, and had stayed there ever since, for her father and mother had died of plague. When she was told that her husband was dead, she was too young to care, but now it was different somehow.

The young man who came to the village to sell bullocks was very good-looking, and he had spoken to Gomti at the well, but Janki had heard of it and scolded her, and told her that a Brahman woman must not speak to such men of low caste. What did his caste matter? She couldn't marry anybody, high

or low, and she hoped he would come again. He said he would, on his way from the big fair at Batesar. Well, she would see him again. Besides, her young brother Debi kept teasing her because she was a widow. He was only seventeen, and he was married, and his wife was coming to live with him, and she was two years younger than Gomti.

As the hot weather dawn was breaking on the 27th of May, Munni the watchman was wearily completing his last round of the village of Mallanpur. He saw two jackals slink by like grey ghosts, and he glanced with unerring instinct at the leaden sky. Yes, there was a black speck high above, and another and another circling ever lower, until one vulture dropped on a field not a furlong distant and was joined immediately by half-adozen more. Munni was a Chamar, untouchable by a high-caste Hindu, because he skinned dead animals, and all dead cattle were the perquisites of his caste-fellows. So Munni hastened to the field, hoping to find a good cow or bullock dying or dead. If he was quick, he would forestall his furred and feathered rivals, who would soon tear the body to pieces and destroy its skin. But when he got to the edge of the field, and stepped on to the low ridge which surrounded it, he saw close to his feet no valuable beast, but the corpse of a woman lying in a pool of blood.

Munni's shout soon brought out the villagers, and the headman, when he had made sure that the woman was a stranger, told Munni to go to the police-station and report the matter. This he could do with an easy mind, for one glance showed him that the woman had been mutilated by axe-blows on the nose and breast, and he reasoned that she was an unfaithful wife or erring maiden, and had met with a just reward, and as none of his own village would have any motive for so his own village would have any motive for so would not worry him or his tenants, and would be obliged to seek a victim elsewhere.

Police Sub-Inspector Rameshar Singh had been trained at the new Police Training College, and this was his first independent charge. He was full of enthusiasm, and on receiving the report rode quickly to Mallanpur and began his investigation. He found the body lying untouched. The cause of death was obvious, an axe-wound on the head, and the motive suggested by the headman was borne out by the fact that the young woman appeared to be enceinte. For the rest, her skirt and shawl and her broken glass bangles betokened a Hindu, and the marks of wheels leading to and from a country road showed that she had been brought to the place in a bullockcart. All attempts to follow the tracks on the dry dusty road were unsuccessful.

The sub-inspector sent the body to the headquarters town for a post-mortem examination. An Indian doctor confirmed the suspicion of pregnancy and gave the woman's age as eighteen. In the meantime the neighbouring villages were searched without result, and before long it became impossible to keep the body, so it was cremated, and the subinspector had nothing but the clothes to help in the identification. In vain he went further and further afield, checking every report of missing women, first in his own circle of eighty villages, and then in the neighbouring circles. As a last resort he asked leave to inspect the reports of the police-stations in the adjoining district of Jalpur. One day in the policestation of Shahabad he found a note in the diary which ran as follows: 'Janki Prasad Brahman of village Dasapur came to the station and said that three days ago his widowed sister Gomti aged about sixteen

years had disappeared from his house; despite search, no trace could be found, nor was there any reason known for her absence.' The date of the report was the 1st of June, and a glance at the map showed that Dasapur was only eighteen miles from Mallanpur, where the murdered woman was found on the morning of the 27th of May.

At once the officer began to reason as follows: Young Brahman widows often err, being unmarriageable. The woman who had been found was pregnant. The relations of such women, rather than bear the shame, frequently kill them. If Janki Prasad had killed his sister he would have to report her absence, and could not delay his report for many days, but he would not give the correct day for fear of saying too much; moreover, he may have heard that the body was found before the vultures had done their work. As to the age, doctors are not to be trusted, and villagers' notions of age are unreliable. In short, the clue was well worth following up, and he disclosed his theory to his henchman, Sultan Khan, a sturdy head-constable of thirty years' experience with a great reputation for finding evidence.

There was little resemblance between the two men. Rameshar was a Hindu, still in his twenties, modern, slim, and dapper from his neat turban with the gold fringe to his polished gaiters; Sultan was a Mohammedan of sixty, old-fashioned, stout, in an undress of white muslin shirt worn outside his wide trousers, his long beard dyed with henna to celebrate his fourth marriage, and on his head a red fez. The names of God and his Prophet were ever on his lips, and he was known in the force as Maulvi Sahib. The Maulvi heard what his chief had to say, replied briefly that with God's help the truth would be found, saluted and left.

IT appeared that the Maulvi's prayer was answered, for after four days spent in Dasapur and the neighbourhood he returned with a young man named Kallu, who, he said, had information for the sub-inspector sahib.

Kallu was an Ahir by caste, twenty-one years of age and newly married. He had as a matter of course borrowed money for his wedding, and everything that he had or was likely to have was pledged to the local money-lender. Rameshar, being a well-trained and modern officer, told him that he must not

expect any favour if he had anything to confess, but being also an Indian and anxious to solve his case, added that, of course, it would be very much better for him if he spoke the truth, as a falsehood would be surely detected and result in dire punishment. So Kallu told his tale.

'I have done wrong,' he said. 'A month ago the Brahman came to me in the evening and said: "Kallu, I need your help. You know my sister Gomti. She has disgraced my house, and, although a virgin widow, has conceived a child. My honour is more to me than my own life or hers. Only her death can save me. I must have the help of two men, and Gajadhar the barber has already promised. You will only have to drive a bullockcart as I direct, and your debt to the moneylender will be paid. Moreover, you will have done a good deed, for you will have saved a Brahman's honour." Sub-inspector Sahib, I was tempted. I had never hoped to pay my debt, and what was a woman's life compared to a Brahman's honour? On the next night I went to Janki's shed and harnessed his bullocks to the cart and waited at the place appointed. Then Janki and Gajadhar came with the woman, who was saying that she wanted to wait till the morning, as it was so late, but Janki said no, if they waited it would be an inauspicious day for a journey to the north, and he had told them they would arrive before dawn.'

'Who do you mean by "them"?' asked the sub-inspector.

'That I know not, but it seemed that the woman expected to go to some relations for her confinement. After we had gone a little way she went to sleep, and Janki whispered to me to change the direction of the cart and go to the west. When we had crossed into the Mirpuri district he told me to leave the track and drive into a field and stop the cart. The woman woke and said: "Where are we?" He said: "We have arrived. Get out of the cart." She did so, and without delay he cried: "Ram, Ram," and struck her on the head with an axe which he brought from under a sheet in the cart. When she fell, he struck her again on the face and breast, and said: "So perish one who has dishonoured a Brahman." Then he gave me the axe, and I struck one blow, and Gajadhar also struck her, and we left her lying in a pool of blood. Then Janki cleaned the axe carefully with earth, and saw that we had no blood on our loincloths; we wore no other clothes on account of the great heat, and we drove home by another road.'

Rameshar saw in this tale a wonderful realisation of his own astuteness, but he feared to be too hasty, and, concealing his excitement, merely said: 'I suppose, then, you can drive me to the place.' 'Certainly,' said Kallu, and they set out straightway with the Maulvi and another constable, and Kallu showed first where they had turned to the west and then where they had left the road, and arrived at length at the scene of the crime, where the wheel-marks of the cart were still visible. And this, too, seemed to be a piece of good fortune, for the rains were a full fortnight overdue, and this delay had saved this precious bit of evidence.

There were two further tests of Kallu's truthfulness. First he had to go before the European superintendent of police, and then before a magistrate. The first sifted the story well, and believed him, but the main test was the examination by the magistrate, for a statement made to him could be used in evidence against himself and his accomplices. Kallu spent the night in jail in a solitary cell and was given time for reflection, and next day he was brought before the district magistrate himself. This magistrate was a religious Hindu, of a caste which claimed to be Brahman, and he was really concerned to think that one of the priestly caste should be in danger of an ignominious death. So he questioned Kallu carefully and cautioned him more than once that there was no hope of pardon, but Kallu remained firm and stuck to his story in every detail.

In Indian jails, partly from lack of room, under-trial prisoners are kept together in a barrack and are not forbidden to talk, and some old offenders soon told Kallu that he was a fool, and would be hanged, and it was quite likely that he alone would be hanged, for he alone had confessed. And when Kallu said that the Maulvi had promised him a pardon and land as well, and that the subinspector had winked when he told him to be sure and tell the magistrate that no pardon had been offered, they said he would be judged by his own words and not by a policeman's wink. So Kallu broke down in court, and said his story was all a lie, and had been extorted by threats and blows, and, finding that he was not believed, fell back on the old story that he had been drugged and did not know what he said. The assessors had not believed

this recantation, and found all three of the accused guilty of murder. The judge was not bound in law to accept the verdict, and he reserved judgment till the following day.

T was a morning in October. The rains were over and the sun was shining from a cloudless sky on a world of life renewed. The trial of Janki, Gajadhar, and Kallu for the murder of Gomti had ended on the previous The prisoners had been brought evening. from the jail in fetters under a police escort, and were sitting under a banian-tree near the courthouse. The escort were not encouraging. One of them who claimed long experience of the ways of courts pointed out that, for Hindus, killing a Brahman is the most heinous of crimes, and surely a verdict involving a death-sentence comes very near killing. Yet this time all the assessors were for conviction, and, even if they had not been, the judge would convict nine times out of ten. other compressed his throat in an irritating manner, and made gurgling noises suggestive of hanging.

In the courtroom the pleaders were seated, reckoning up the chances, and one and all expected a conviction. Rameshar Singh felt confident. He had no doubt that the murdered girl was Gomti, and although he felt that he had gone rather far when he stated in evidence that he noticed a close resemblance between the corpse and Gomti's brother Debi, he excused himself by the reflection that everyone had spoken of the strong family likeness.

'Now then,' said a court official, 'the judge is coming. See his orderly carrying the box in which the judgment is written.' Then he looked at Janki, remarking: 'No hope, I fear.' So the prisoners were led into the courtroom and made to stand in the dock, and they found the judge already seated, pen in hand, about to pronounce the words of doom. 'Write not, O judge,' cried Janki. 'I know my sister is not dead. I offer five hundred rupees to any who can find her.'

Now the judge had noted Rameshar's lie. He knew very well that he could have seen no resemblance between the noseless corpse of a woman and a living youth of seventeen, whom he saw for the first time some weeks later. He was also impressed by the medical evidence. Doctors are not infallible, but this doctor had judged the age of the corpse entirely from his medical knowledge, and with-

out any suggestion of the age by relations. He had said she was eighteen, a critical stage in bone formation, and there was no doubt about Gomti's age, for she was a year younger than Debi, who was certainly seventeen. Thus the only direct evidence of identity was against the crown case. As to the confession of Kallu, the judge had heard many false confessions, and he was not impressed by its apparent spontaneity. What he considered was whether the confession added any new verifiable fact. not known to the police, and he found none. The police had no doubt taken Kallu to the spot, and all that he said was in confirmation of their theory and of the known facts. Moreover, the judge did not believe that a Brahman who felt bound to protect his honour by killing a beloved sister would employ such persons as Kallu, a herdsman, and Gajadhar, a barber, as his assistants.

So when, after Janki's outburst, the usher cried: 'Silence, silence,' and order was restored, the judge looked up and said quietly: 'Go and find her yourself—you are all acquitted,' and signed the judgment which he had prepared.

NOW the young herdsman who had attracted Gomti's fancy had felt equally drawn towards her. He had managed to see her on his way back from the fair, where he had done good business, selling his own stock and buying new at a handsome profit. He returned alone without any cattle in the month of May, found her in the fields in the early morning, and persuaded her to come away with him. No one had seen the meeting, and he lay hidden till she joined him in the evening. He took her to his own village on the other side of the Jamna, and they lived happily together. The village people thought none the worse of her or her lover for their illicit union, which they regarded as a marriage.

Gomti intended to let her brothers know some day that she was alive and happy, but she knew that Janki would be ashamed and angry, and she let the days slip by. It was her young brother Debi who knew that she had spoken to the herdsman, and as a last hope began to search for the man, of whom little was known, except that he came from across the Jamna, which was practically impassable in the rainy months of July, August, and September. He managed, however, to get a clue, and as soon as he was released

from giving evidence at the trial he crossed the river, now fallen to manageable width, and found the village on the last day of the trial. He soon met his sister, who was delighted to see him, and when she heard that Janki was in danger of his life, she agreed at once to come forward and confess the truth.

Thus it happened that on the morning of the judgment, when the collector of Jalpur had finished his morning paper, and was busy calculating his chances of being promoted as Commissioner of a Division on the next leave vacancy, he was disturbed by a sound of altercation outside, in which he detected a distinctly feminine laugh, and told his butler to go and see what it was all about.

The butler returned and said that a young woman was bandying words with the police orderly, because he would not let her see the sahib. 'I don't want to see a young woman,' said the irate official. 'Send her away.' But no, she would not go, and the butler reported that she was talking nonsense about her brother being hanged for killing her. So the collector went to his office and told the servant to bring the woman in.

She turned out to be a lively, good-looking girl of sixteen, who said that she was called Gomti, that she had run away from home because she was not allowed to marry, and the man she was living with was at the gate with her younger brother, who had found her the day before and told her that her elder brother Janki was being hanged for killing her, and would the collector sahib do something about it. So the collector, after verifying the girl's story, and noticing that she was exactly like her brother Debi, and that two respectable men of their village whom he sent for were ready to vouch for them both, wrote to the judge saying that he understood that he had just convicted a man for the murder of a young lady who was very much alive, but no doubt he would know the correct procedure in such cases. Fortunately no such error had been committed.

IT was left to the liberated Kallu to explain his confession. Once he felt safe, he told all and sundry that the old head-constable had put the matter to him thus: 'If you say what I tell you, you will be pardoned, because it is no sin for a Brahman to kill a woman who has dishonoured him, and once you are pardoned, the police will protect you, and make you prosperous. But if, on the other hand, you don't agree, your young wife will be taken to the police-station, and you know what that means.'

The identity of the murdered woman was never established with certainty, but it may be that she was the wife of a soldier whose home was in a village close to the Jamna river. The register of births and deaths was in those days written up at the police-station on the information of the village watchman. Now in the months of May and June the watchman of the village where this woman Parmeshri lived made no report because he was ill, but in July he reported the death of the wife of Maharaj Singh Sepoy, through falling into the river, where she had been carried away by a crocodile, and was supposed to have been totally devoured. He did not know the date. or at least did not give any, and no doubt such an uncommon accident might have occurred when the river burst into flood in July. There are some crocodiles in the Jamna, and they have been known to attack adult women; but it appeared that Parmeshri was going to give birth to a child, and her husband had only returned to the village from the army at the end of May after too long an absence, and the witnesses were the husband and his father.

Rameshar Singh had studied only the reports of missing women, not the reports of those whose deaths had been duly attested and explained, but it is a matter for doubt whether, even if he had hit upon the case of Parmeshri, he would have been able to obtain any evidence to support a criminal prosecution.

Progress

A bore I held to be a man
Whose thoughts round self too often ran.
But now he's one, I've come to see,
Who fails to think enough of me.

CHARLES KELLIE.

Wood-Destroyers

JEAN DALLAS COPE

N the past it was the custom of some manufacturers of reproduction antique furniture to make fake worm-holes on the surface of the wood, thus giving the articles what was considered to be an appearance of genuine age. Unfortunately, evidence of wood-boring beetle attack is not always an indication of antiquity. Conditions which encourage outbreaks will as readily cause infestation whether

the timber be old or new.

In recent years so great has been the increase in damage to property and possessions due to the presence of wood-borers that worm-holes in furniture would be more likely to decrease. rather than increase, sales at the present time. For that reason, dealers in secondhand furniture have been known to disguise these telltale signs. One method of doing this is by filling the bore-holes with a wax tinted to match the wood. Of course, this cover-up treatment does not cure the trouble, or prevent further outbreaks: one infested article, placed among other sound pieces, may prove to be the means of infecting not only these pieces, but also floor-boards and other structural timber.

To deal properly with cases of beetle damage some knowledge of the habits and life history of the borers is desirable. First the egg is laid by the beetle in or upon the surface of the wood. Then the grub or worm develops from the egg, and feeds upon the wood, boring and tunnelling during the whole period, which is, indeed, the greater part of the insect's lifecycle. Next is the chrysalis or dormant stage. During this period the well-fed grub makes a cavity near the surface, in which it rests for a few weeks before it finally leaves the wood: it is then an adult beetle.

Mating takes place when the beetles emerge. The male dies soon afterwards, leaving the female to live on for a few weeks to lay her eggs, and so start the life-cycle over again.

ALTHOUGH there are a great variety of wood-boring insects, we are troubled only by a few species in this country. According to expert opinion, the common furniture beetle is responsible for most of the damage. This insect, which is reddish-brown in colour and about 1 of an inch long, bears a very misleading name indeed, as it appears to attack most types of wood, for whatever purpose it is used.

Usual signs of infestation are the appearance of small piles of fine wood-dust expelled by the grub as it tunnels into the wood, and the exit holes, which show that the beetle has emerged. Boring within may continue for a period of one or two years and it is during this time that

damage is done.

This beetle's potential for damage is perhaps greatest during the months of June to August, which is when the females lay between twenty and forty eggs. If these were allowed to hatch and continue breeding undisturbed for a matter of ten years, each would have 200,000 descendants. This illustrates how necessary it is to treat with preservatives furniture that is to be left undisturbed for any length of time-for instance, when a house is to be closed, or furniture put into storage.

Though householders may take pains to keep their furniture free from beetle damage. more costly trouble may result if the structure of a house becomes infested-for example, the

rafters or floor-joists.

When looking for suitable places in which to lay her eggs the beetle will favour rough unpolished spots, for there the wood-cells are exposed and penetration is made easy for the grub when it hatches. These conditions are usually found on the backs and underneathparts of furniture or structures, or where joinery work is weak, and where painted. varnished, or polished surfaces are cracked or damaged.

ANOTHER species of wood-borer, similar in habit to the furniture beetle, is the lyctus beetle, a reddish-black insect, also about of an inch long. The adult beetles usually emerge during the months of June to August, although under warm, dry conditions this may happen as early as February. The female lays between thirty and fifty eggs during the few weeks she lives, and the life-cycle from egg to beetle is about one year.

Timber likely to be attacked is the sapwood of hardwoods, of which ash, oak, elm, and hickory are examples. Damage due to lyctus can often be seen in the structural wood of old houses, and particularly in cottages where ash branches have been used as rafters. Recent inspections made of some old cottages where the roofs have collapsed show that wood which had not crumbled completely was paper-light, and honeycombed with holes. When heavy beams have been attacked by this insect, the remaining wood, still strong and bearing heavy loads, will almost certainly be the unwanted heartwood, which will, unfortunately, still prove food for the furniture beetle.

HE death-watch beetle, chocolate-brown in colour and about & of an inch long, favours old structural timber. The adult emerges and mates between April and June. The females deposit eggs on rough surfaces and they hatch out in two to eight weeks. The grubs wander about on the surface for a time before they begin tunnelling, and the time spent inside the wood by this insect may amount to a number of years, depending on the condition of the wood. Although the beetle is fully formed by August, it remains in the inside until the following spring, and crawls out leaving a round flight-hole approximately a of an inch in diameter.

The presence of the death-watch beetle does not necessarily indicate serious damage, but expert advice should be sought before repairs are undertaken, as inspections have often revealed that the structural stability of buildings is threatened, due to other timber disease. To prevent attacks by this pest, timber should be kept dry and sound by eliminating all sources of dampness. All gutters and rooftiles or slates should be kept in good repair.

During the mating season the beetles call to each other by making a tapping sound with their heads. It has happened that when illness has occurred in infected houses this sound has

been heard in the quiet that so often precedes death. Thus, it is said, the death-watch beetle came by its name.

HE house longhorn beetle is the rarest of our timber pests. This is fortunate, because it is also the most dangerous and most feared. The insect may measure from 1 of an inch to 3 inches in length, and emerges during the months of June, July, and August, and leaves a large oval flight-hole.

The grub may spend from one to eleven years boring inside the wood, during which time a great deal of damage is likely to be unobserved until a state of collapse is reached. This is because no bore-dust is expelled by the grub, and because it leaves a thin outer shell

of the wood intact.

So devastating have been attacks upon property by this beetle in some Continental countries that compulsory insurance against it has been ordered. The danger is considered so grave that in this country where attack by this pest is suspected it is recommended that a sample of infected timber should be sent to Forest Products Laboratories at Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, for inspection and advice. This beetle is more likely to infest structural wood than furniture.

ALL beetle damage may be classified as the result of timber disease, and with all diseases prevention is better than cure. Treatment to prevent infestation is simple, though not always easy to apply where large furniture or structural timber is concerned. Painting over all the rough surfaces and cracks with a good proprietary wood-preservative is recommended, and the compound must penetrate well into all crevices. When wood is actually infested, the same brush treatment with preservative is necessary, but it should be applied during the spring and summer for two or three successive years to effect a complete cure. The result of treating the wood is to poison the food of the larvæ, and they will reject it and starve.

To eradicate the death-watch beetle treatment is given during April, May, and June, annually for four years. This lengthy treatment is advised because research has shown that grubs deeply embedded when the wood is treated can often bore their way out through poisoned timber unharmed.

It is sometimes recommended that preservative be injected also into all flight-holes in infected timber, in addition to the painting process. This is, perhaps, a counsel of perfection and can be a tedious task where wood has been heavily attacked.

In spite of all the ills that wood is heir to, if

it is well cared for and thoroughly treated against known dangers with well-tried preservatives, it will still be found the best, cheapest, and most durable of materials, and it will always remain the most beautiful medium for working, capable of the most attractive uses.

Road-Safety in the United States

JOSEPH BARRETT

WITH road casualty figures continuing their upward spiral, many countries are now becoming seriously alarmed at the inadequacy of existing road-safety measures. In Britain alone, 19,921 people are known to have been killed or injured on the roads during January 1956—an overall increase of 4430 over the figures for the same month in 1955.

The story is much the same in most other countries where statistics are available. But it is in America where casualties are undoubtedly heaviest. In a nation where two families out of every three are car-owners, seven people die on the roads each year for every one killed in the United Kingdom.

Small wonder, then, that road-safety has become a number one priority in the United States. Provincial Highway Departments are ready to consider any practical suggestions from the public which will help to reduce the mounting toll of killed and injured, and some interesting experiments are now being carried out in various parts of the country.

ONE of the most promising experiments and one which the Central Government has agreed to finance—is being developed at Manchester, Connecticut. Brain-child of a motor-research engineer, Andrew White, it is remarkable for its simplicity and low cost. Experimenting with a variety of rosebush called the multiflora rose or Japanese rose, White has shown how this much-maligned plant could save hundreds of lives on American highways each year. The rose being a prolific grower, one single cutting of it will develop in ten years into a tangled, springy mass of leaves and climbers nearly ten feet high and eight feet across.

By planting the rose at danger-spots along the roadside, a wall of the bushes would catch a speeding car like a flexible net. On the White testing-grounds, cars driven headlong into the bushes at more than 50 m.p.h. were dragged to a halt without a single scratch on their paintwork. The occupants suffered no more than a slight shaking.

A FEW minutes' thought by an American housewife has already halved the number of accidents on a stretch of road in Connecticut. Blinded by the dazzle of headlights from oncoming cars, she found herself repeatedly swerving away and over the kerbless edge of the highway. Although she succeeded in halting her car before it could leave the road, other motorists were not always so fortunate.

One or two experiences of this kind prompted her to ask whether a white line at the edge of the road would not prove as effective as the existing white line in the centre. The Connecticut Highway Department found

that it did—and the next step was to make the line luminous. Impressed by its success, other States are considering adopting the idea themselves.

Another bugbear to road-users is the danger from tyre-bursts, a cause of road accidents which is often underestimated.

Recently, on a ten-mile stretch of road near McArthur, Ohio, police reported during a period of twelve hours an unusually high puncture-rate, equivalent to one burst every five minutes. Purely as an experiment, the Highway Department sent out a number of cars fitted with magnetised bumpers, and in a short time thousands of nails and other sharp pieces of metal were picked off the road. After the operation, the Department were able to report that accidents from this cause had been completely eliminated.

OTHER novel experiments include the posting of dummy traffic-officers at busy road-junctions to discourage speeding, provision of free coffee for long-distance night-drivers, and an increasing use of police escorts for inebriated motorists. The last-named service has become so popular in certain Continental countries that private hire-service bureaux are now offering every kind of facility for seeing incapable drivers safely to their homes.

For pedestrians, clothing made of special reflecting material is the latest road-safety device. Collars, cuffs, and gloves are now on sale which shine with such dazzling brightness in the light of car headlamps that no driver can fail to see them.

According to statements released by the driving laboratory of the Iowa State College, the material, which looks like any other kind of cloth in daytime, will reflect 150 times as much light as a white-painted surface. Although it is too early yet to assess the usefulness of this 'glowworm' attire, the idea is certainly yielding dividends and is now being copied in other countries.

MUCH of the American effort, however, is directed towards the provision of compulsory road-safety instruction, and it is becoming commonplace nowadays for traffic offenders to be given the choice of a court charge or attendance at one of the road-safety schools.

Most successful of these, perhaps, is the Pedestrian Safety School at Portland, Oregon, where culprits are given a course of lectures organised by the Director of Public Safety.

The curriculum is strong medicine. To say nothing of the sobering mass of accident statistics which form the main ingredients of the course, there is a particularly harrowing eye-witness account of a pedestrian's death in a road accident.

The School's success may be gauged from the fact that, shortly after its foundation, pedestrian deaths in Portland had been cut by nearly two-thirds.

Sayonara Shimotsui

No, I will not come back here, nevermore Watch the red mountain burn above the plain, The misted islands swim back from the shore, The fanning feathers of the bamboo-cane. I cannot ask a day like this again, Nor seek perfection where it was before, For, after all, to-morrow it may rain And spoil a memory. But keep in store This unsoiled day unblemished by regret, And when I go, Mièko, you will find Nothing has changed. The day we leave behind Will mingle with the days before we met. Believe me, Spring remembered is more green Than any Spring on earth has ever been.

TOM WRIGHT.



Buyer's Market

FRANK DRISCOLL

'FOUR hundred francs,' he said, when I asked how much I owed him. It may have been my expression, or how long I dug in my pocket, I don't know; but before I had the money out he added: 'Give me two hundred.' And then quickly, confidentially: 'But tell my wife you paid me four.'

I nodded knowingly, and handed him two hundred-franc notes, hurriedly putting the other two back into my pocket. I had only spent one night on their farm, but, even so, I would have done exactly the same if I had been in his shoes. It had only taken me ten minutes or so on the night before to come to that conclusion.

I was broke, and on my way home through France to England. From Marseilles I had got a lift as far as Aix, and then trudged along the sweltering road north.

It was very hot, and very dusty, and no one seemed to want to give me a lift. Blow them, I thought, as each car swished by, I can walk. I did, too—right through the day, right through until the sun went down and the cicadas came to life in the roadside scrub.

IT was then that I saw their farm, in a shallow valley about a hundred yards off the road.

It was the only house I had seen near the road for the last hour. At either end of the buildings there were the inevitable cypresses pointing up to the still bright sky. The terraced fields which surrounded the place were lined with grape-vines and stunted olive-trees. It wasn't much of a farm, but it looked quiet and peaceful down there amid the dark of the trees.

She came to the door when I knocked—a large, handsome, olive-faced woman, in a gingham dress and with bare feet. 'Yes?' she asked crisply. 'What do you want?'

'I was wondering-er-if you would let me stay here for the night?'

'Stay here-?'

'Yes,' I went on quickly. 'I have money and I should like to rent a room for the night.'

She looked at me suspiciously. 'I must ask my husband. Wait there.'

She half-closed the door, went through into a lighted back-room and started talking to someone in a dialect I could not follow.

It was night now and, except for the distant hum of an approaching car on the main road and the croaking of frogs in a near-by pond, their murmuring voices were the only sounds.

After a time, her husband came out to me.

He carried an oil-lamp, and held it high as he spoke: 'You want to stay the night, eh?'

'Yes,' I blinked as the light dazzled me.
'I'm on my way to Paris.'

'English?' he asked at length.

'Yes,' I replied.

Lowering the lamp, he stood back and pushed the door wider open. 'Come in,' he said. 'You can have the spare room.'

WHEN we got through into the kitchen I could see they had finished their supper, and the woman was in the back outhouse now, clearing up plates and things. The man, tall but stooped, motioned me to sit down, and then called through to his wife to get me some supper. She didn't answer; so he and I talked and smoked while she made a lot of noise the other side of the doorway. And then, grudgingly it seemed to me, she came through and put two plates on the table, one of soup and the other fried aubergines.

She didn't look at either of us, but went straight back again, ignoring my 'Merci'. The man glanced up at me for a moment and his lined face smiled reassuringly. I felt I could eat freely then, and did, too. I didn't

see his wife again that evening.

After I had eaten and the man had given me a glass of pastis, he asked me to come out and he would show me over the place. Leisurely we strolled across the dusty, dried-up earth between the rows of vines, past the olive-trees, and smoked and talked in the cool of the evening. He was an interesting old fellow, and had seen a great deal of the world while serving in the French army and for five years in the Foreign Legion. At odd moments we could hear his wife moving about around the back of the house, but soon all was quiet.

We walked on in silence for a while, and then the old man suddenly chuckled softly to himself. I looked at him, but in the darkness his face was just a shadow. 'Don't let her worry you,' he began by way of an explanation. 'About the supper, I mean. She gets like that with strangers. You see, my wife isn't like me. She's never been out of this part of the country, and—well, she's rather shy.' He chuckled again. 'You know what women are about a bit of food and things.'

'That's all right,' I said, adding: 'I suppose it's their job to worry about such things.'

'Yes,' he replied thoughtfully. 'Yes, I suppose it is.'

We went back to the house soon after that and sat out on the small verandah at the side. He brought out the pastis bottle again, and a jug of water. We smoked and drank, and then, when it was near midnight, he got up and showed me through to where I was to sleep. It was a small but comfortable room. There was no sign of his wife. In fact, I had not even heard anything of her since we had come in from the fields.

As he was turning to leave me, I said:

'Thanks again for fixing me up.'

He shrugged his massive shoulders. 'It's nothing,' he said. And then he was gone. Before I fell asleep I could hear him moving about in the room next door.

THE following morning the two were astir early, so, not wanting to delay their routine, I got up, too. The husband was outside, already at work near the house when I went through into the kitchen. I said goodmorning to the woman when she came in from the outhouse, but she only nodded assent and went on getting some food for me, as though I was not there. I thought of leaving immediately, but on reflection decided that this might upset her even more. So as soon as she put bread and coffee on the table I sat and ate.

When I had finished, I went out into the already hot sun, over to where the man was at work

When he saw me, he straightened his back and called out: 'Sleep well?'

'Very,' I answered. 'And you?'

He screwed up his eyes for a moment and grimaced towards the back outhouse. 'Not bad,' he said, smiling wryly. 'Not bad.'

'I'm sorry if-'

'No, no,' he interrupted quickly. 'Don't worry. She'll be all right.'

'Well, let me settle with you,' I went on. 'How much do I owe you?'

It was then that he said: 'Four hundred francs. Give me two hundred. But tell my wife you paid me four.'

We laughed and shook hands, and I went

back again to the house still chuckling to myself at this old Frenchman's way of getting round the sometimes embarrassing thrift of womenfolk.

I went through to the outhouse and told his wife as he had asked me to tell her. I thanked her, but still she didn't say anything, so I went into the kitchen and got my bag. I was turning for the door when she entered the room and came over towards me. She didn't say anything at first, but I could tell

by her eyes that she wanted to. Then she squeezed two 100-franc notes into my hand. 'It was too much,' she said. 'But don't tell my husband.'

Something Is Known The Prisoner's Past in Trials

CHARLES BURBANK

UNLESS it be a murder trial, the tension at the hearing of a criminal case usually relaxes once the verdict of 'Guilty' has been announced. A few ears may be strained to catch the answer to the familiar question: 'Is anything known?' but those in the public gallery usually follow this part of the proceedings with less critical attention than they give to the earlier stages.

Yet the evidence that is offered about the accused person's antecedents will certainly affect his future no less than the testimony that led to his conviction, for it is this information that largely determines the nature of the sentence the court will impose. Its importance received recognition recently when the judges of the Queen's Bench—the division of the High Court whose members tour England and Wales to preside at the Courts of Assize—quietly issued new instructions upon the giving to courts of what legal jargon terms 'the pre-trial history of the accused person' and most of us call simply 'his record'.

Brought up as we are in the tradition that a man is presumed innocent until his peers adjudge him guilty, it is one of our strongest illusions about British justice that when a person 'with a record' is tried the court knows nothing of his earlier convictions. Frequently the accused does not enjoy this safeguard. Especially in the lower courts, where most criminal cases are heard, those upon the Bench often know the main features—invari-

ably the worst, not the best, features—of the accused's career from gossip, from the local Press, or from his previous appearances in court. And, however conscientiously magistrates may strive to administer justice, it is hard for them not to feel that a motorist whom they have previously fined probably 'makes a habit of speeding' or that a man whom they know was once gaoled for poaching cannot have an innocent motive for taking country walks.

While it is unfortunate that an accused person should suffer this handicap, it is doubtful whether all the ingenuity and learning of the Queen's Bench could devise rules to avoid it. Even in the Assize Courts, where these judges themselves preside over criminal trials, the accused's elaborate show of hesitation when he is escorted into court-sufficient to convince the jurors that he has no previous acquaintance with the dock-cannot fool the bewigged figure on the Bench. If the judge desires, he can refer to the prisoner's record almost back to the days when the police first picked him up for slipping into the children's matinee by the cinema exit-doors, for this incriminating information is contained in the 'confidential calendar' supplied to judges by the governors of the gaols from whence the prisoners have been brought for trial.

NO attempt was made to alter this practice when the recent directive was issued.

So the judges themselves apparently have no fear that this prior knowledge of a prisoner's past delinquencies might colour a trial judge's summing-up, upon which the jurors rely for guidance in reaching their verdict. Indeed, instead of restricting still further the distribution of an accused's record, the principal reform made by the judges increases the number of people who may have access to it. They have ordered that a copy of the list of previous convictions alleged by the police 'must always be supplied by the police to the defending solicitor or counsel'.

Although this new rule will displease those defendants who prefer to be coy about their past, in the belief that the knowledge that his client is a rogue may spoil a defender's advocacy, it will be a boon to many advocates. Often the defence has found itself at a disadvantage because it has not known that the prosecution intended to prove a previous

conviction.

One young English solicitor, having unsuccessfully defended a shopkeeper charged with a rationing offence under one of the Emergency Regulations, was put off his stroke when the police spokesman told the Bench: 'There is a previous conviction under Emergency Powers Order No. 1720'. The Bench nodded gravely and whispered together. It looked as if the shopkeeper was to suffer the heavy fine that usually followed persistent rationing offences—until the culprit tugged his solicitor's sleeve and demanded indignantly: 'Here, what's my having parked on the wrong side of the road in the blackout got to do with selling over the controlled price?'

Misunderstandings of this kind are rare, because the police statement invariably quotes the nature of the previous offence in full, but the habit of springing news of alleged past convictions just as the defence is about to make its plea in mitigation can cause injustice if the accused disputes the accuracy of his record. Police clerks are not infallible, and at one time a list of convictions often brought cries of surprised indignation from the dock.

An elderly man charged at Reading some years ago with stealing apples from a tree in a garden strenuously denied the police statement that he had about eighty convictions behind him. 'I have never been in prison in my life,' he insisted. But the chairman of the Bench replied: 'We are absolutely satisfied that you have had these convictions, and shall sentence you to three months' hard labour.'

Since then, however, courts have tended to give offenders the benefit of any doubt in such cases. The Baldock (Hertfordshire) magistrates in 1951 discharged a man accused of stealing wrist-watches after the police had failed to convince them that a criminal record sheet, showing four previous convictions, produced by Scotland Yard's Criminal Record Office, actually related to the accused.

The police are fortunate not to have aroused those doughty watchdogs of 20th-century justice, the motoring organisations, for several instances have occurred in recent years of people convicted of motoring offences being flabbergasted to hear a constable recite a long list of unknown crimes. A Brighton man prominent in the life of his community was so upset at hearing the police tell the Bench in a near-by town-where he had the misfortune to exceed the speed-limit-that he had previously stolen a car, had driven an unlicensed vehicle, and had been drunk, that his Member of Parliament demanded that he be awarded 'appropriate compensation'. And in the Highgate (London) magistrates' court the police 'humbly apologised' to a motorist, guilty of dangerous driving, against whom they had wrongly alleged a previous conviction.

How many of these errors escape notice in undefended cases, or when the offender does not appear but is represented by a solicitor unacquainted with his history, is anyone's guess. But the police err both ways. They informed the London Sessions a couple of years ago that a store-breaker was of good character, when he actually had seven previous conictions, mostly for 'breaking and entering', and had been an inmate of a Borstal institution!

THE information upon which the court determines the sentence is not confined, however, to a mere list of convictions. It may be unusual in a motoring case for the police to extract from a motorist's dossier, as they did on one occasion at the Cornish town of St Austell, such a titbit of information as: '1932. Application for permission to marry. Granted.', but in more serious cases the police carry out with apparent enthusiasm the judicial demand for a detailed picture of the accused's life and background. The recent direction of the Queen's Bench Division asked that judges should be given 'particulars of

age, education, and employment' with 'a short and concise statement as to the prisoner's domestic and family circumstances, his general reputation and associates'—including whether or not 'he associates with bad characters'.

The courts obviously need this information if their sentences are to be anything more than merely punitive, but that does not mean that the police are necessarily the best people to assemble it. While policemen are usually most circumspect on these occasions, whatever their personal views of the accused, occasionally the most experienced officer will allow his tongue to slip into an indiscretion. One English court a few years back was told, in answer to an inquiry about the nature of the accused's business: 'He roams the country making a general nuisance of himself.'

This kind of 'evidence' about defendants' characters would earn a judicial rebuke at the Assizes or Quarter Sessions, but many lay magistrates still allow the most outrageously biased statements once the accused has been safely convicted. Even a stipendiary magistrate, always a barrister of at least seven years' standing, may not have the time to remind policemen to keep their personal opinions for the canteen. It was a London stipendiary who, having asked a detective: 'Are there any previous convictions?' let pass unreproved the startling reply: 'No, your worship. He is too clever a thief for us to have laid our hands on him before!'

Occasionally the information given about an offender's background seems flagrantly irrelevant to the case. Of one woman who was found guilty, a court was told that she had been neglecting her children, that she had been living with a man not her husband, and that she had now abandoned him for another man. Yet the offences of which she had been convicted were driving an uninsured vehicle and failing to exhibit 'L' plates or be accompanied by a competent driver—transgressions upon which her record as a motorist would surely have had more bearing than her conduct as a wife and mother.

Not that the police are always ungenerous. They may go out of their way to bring before the court a point in the accused's favour which he is too modest to mention himself. After the spring tides swept over the sea-walls of eastern England in 1953 a police-inspector secured an absolute discharge for a Canvey Island man charged with a minor offence by

telling the Bench: 'This man did good work during the floods...' Even when the offence is a serious one and the offender has a record the police sometimes intervene in his favour. When a young man pleaded guilty at Blackpool's Quarter Sessions to stealing fifty-nine watches, the police clearly felt it was their duty to give both the debit and credit sides of the balance-sheet. Having reported that the prisoner had served a Borstal sentence, they also drew the attention of the Recorder to the fact that he had been awarded a testimonial by the Royal Humane Society for rescuing a boy from drowning.

THERE is nothing sinister about the way in which the police are able to produce these dossiers. The information usually comes from the accused person himself. He is conditioned by official forms that ask questions about his age, family, schooling, and so on; and it rarely occurs to him to challenge the right of the police to this personal data. Having been locked up in a cell for several hours, possibly for days, the average person is prepared to retail his whole life-story from the cradle. Also, the accused does not want to seem an uncoöperative type. He feels that if he helps the police they may make it easier for him when giving evidence about him in court.

Because much of this information comes from the offender himself, it does not follow that it is either true or adequate. With a natural suspicion that prisoners said too little about themselves, the police formerly made inquiries about the accused's character among his acquaintances. This practice had the effect of branding innocent men as criminals in the eyes of their employers and neighbours, and in 1929 it was condemned by a Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure.

Since those days little progress has been made in the method of collecting and presenting this information to the courts. But it is possible that the next time the judges turn their attention to this problem they may urge the use of trained social investigators, in no way associated in the public mind with the police, able to interview the prisoner and those familiar with him. Were such investigators available, they, instead of the police, could go into the witness-box to give the evidence of a convicted offender's antecedents that the court needs to determine the appropriate sentence,

Twice-Told Tales

LXV.—The Beginning of Wisdom

[From Chambers's Journal of May 1856]

N former years, if we may believe the Sieur de la Mottraye, aspirants to the honour of membership of the University of Finland were exposed to absurd and painful tests. 'On the day of their enrolment,' he says, 'all the aspirants to the title of student being assembled in one room, an officer of the academy, named the trustee, advances towards them, and amid the gibes and laughter of those around blackens the face of each, fastens a pair of long ears or horns to his hat, thrusts into each corner of his mouth a long hook or tusk, which he is obliged to hold between his teeth like a couple of small tobacco-pipes, and throws a long black cloak over his shoulders. In this ridiculous disguise the young men are marched out of the room, and into another crowded with spectators, the officer driving them before him with a stick, headed with a small hatchet, as a drover might a number of oxen or asses. He here arranges them into a circle, measuring and equalising them with his stick, like a sergeant dressing his soldiers, at the same time distorting his face into innumerable grimaces, and making them mute reverences; anon, he rallies them upon their strange apparel, and then changing his tone he sternly charges them with every vice or error common to youth, and points out how these must be corrected, punished, and done away with, by the study of belles-lettres. Then changing again from serious to burlesque, or rather tragi-comedy, he asks them several questions, which they are obliged to answer; but on account of the tusks placed between their teeth, they cannot do this distinctly, but grunt out their replies like an army of young pigs, which draws down a reprimand from him, and he applies the appropriate epithet to them, administering at the same time some slight blows about their shoulders with his stick, or striking them with his gloves. He tells them the tusks signify intemperance, the debauches of young men, who, while eating and drinking to excess, obscure the mind as well as overload the stomach. Then drawing from a sort of juggler's bag a pair of wooden pincers, that open and shut with a zigzag motion, he seizes them by the neck, and shakes and jerks the instrument till the tusks fall to the ground; telling them that if they prove docile pupils, willing to profit by the teaching of the academy. they will thus throw off their penchant for intemperance and gluttony. Pulling off the long ears, he says they must apply earnestly to study, or they will resemble the animal to which these appendages belong; and, lastly, he removes the horns, which are symbolical of ferocity and brutality, and taking a plane from the bag, he makes them all lie down upon their faces by turns, while he planes them from top to toe, to indicate that in the same manner belles-lettres will polish their understanding. After a few more similar absurdities, the farce is ended by the officer taking a large vessel full of water, and pouring it over the bare heads of the students till they are drenched to the skin, and wiping their faces roughly with a coarse towel. He then winds up with an address, exhorting them to lead a new life, and to throw off every evil habit from their minds, as they have just done the grotesque habiliments of the body; and declaring them now free students of the academy, on condition that they continue to wear the long cloak for six months: that they go every day, each to those of his own province, to the students who have been previously enrolled, and offer their services to them, whether in the chamber or the auberge; that they obey every order they receive, and submit without a murmur to every reproach and sarcasm offered them.'



Riot Act

GERARD BELL

THE signal came through a minute after midnight—just one word, 'Typhoon'—and hauled us from our camp-beds into the warm, wet darkness of the Indian night. Within fifteen minutes a company of troops had been packed into trucks and we were making for the winding, rain-drenched road over the Western Ghats.

This was something we'd been expecting for weeks. For this was India, 1942, with Gandhi in prison and a wave of civil disobedience sweeping over the whole sub-continent: with every official, civil and military, wondering if that wave would break and subside-or roar on to a bloody crest of riot and murder. Fanatical, white-hatted Congress followers, ignoring their master's counsel against violence, were fermenting trouble all over that vast country-sometimes a full-scale riot between Moslem and Hindu, whipped up from a quarrel in some dingy bazaar; sometimes merely a local disturbance. It could be a village that had caught the craziness-or a district-or a whole city. Meanwhile, all over the human volcano that was India, men waited for code-words like 'Typhoon'-and wondered.

This time there had been a riot at a small town called J-n-not a serious riot, but

the level-crossing keeper had been stoned and the window of a signal-box smashed. The serious item was the removal of a whole section of railway-line near the town, its absence having been detected by a patrol engine only minutes before the night-express was due to pass through.

We'd had enough of flag marches, and marching through narrow, smelly streets between silent ranks of brown faces, wondering if the stone would come, and knowing that even one shot, in self-defence, meant a court of inquiry; knowing, too, what could happen, even to armed men, if a mob went mad in a narrow street. It was a nightmare drive, with the steep ravine sides falling away below to the rain-slashed forest and dark valleys, with the trucks skidding and lumbering round the bends of the road, slithering ominously as the surface became worse.

Eight hours later, as I climbed stiffly from my seat and blinked into the morning sunshine, I glanced instinctively at the gathering crowd, surprised and relieved to see so few of those significant white caps. Then I joined Captain Bean—'Beano'—who was talking to

a smart, young Indian police-officer. Within an hour guards had been posted at the level-crossing, at the telegraph-office and police-station, and a mobile picket detailed to patrol the streets during the hours of darkness. Then Beano and I went into town to meet the chief merchants and magistrates, a lengthy process involving many cups of sticky black coffee. Also, as second in command, it was my job to arrange for local supplies of meat, fruit, and vegetables.

The men were billeted in the high school on the edge of the town, and the four officers in the dak bungalow, about four hundred yards beyond the school. There we had the District Collector, or Commissioner, to lunch. small, sallow man with a quiet voice, he confessed himself frankly puzzled by this sudden outbreak of trouble. Up to now the district had shown no signs of political disturbance, and he hadn't expected any. True, they'd been bothered recently by dacoits -but dacoits didn't pull up railway-lines. He told us a little about dacoits, who were simply gangs of wandering robbers. 'I'm not saying they're out for murder,' he said in his quiet way, 'but they're nasty customers on a night prowl. A dacoit, naked, with his body greased, can slip through a space you wouldn't imagine a child could get through. And if you woke up at the wrong time-well, there's a good chance of a knife in your throat.'

So we sat back and waited for trouble. We spent two perfectly peaceful weeks in J-n.

THE two signals came in together as we breakfasted. One called Beano to an immediate conference at an H.Q. some eighty miles away; the other posted an officer to a line regiment in Assam. They left within an hour, leaving me in command with only one other officer, Jock Crawford.

The implications didn't hit me until that night, when Jock, a taciturn young man, suddenly rose, buckled on his belt, grunted 'Cheerio,' and stumped off into the darkness. Before the mutter of the duty truck had faded, I realised the very unpleasant truth. Jock was Orderly Officer and would sleep in the guardroom at the school.

I was alone in that isolated bungalow—and would be until six o'clock the next morning. Even the elderly Indian who acted as caretaker-cum-cook had gone off to some family celebration—wedding or funeral, I wasn't sure

which—and I'd be lucky to see him by breakfast time, if then.

From the verandah the few lights in the town, especially the light in the guardroom, seemed very far away-much further than a quarter of a mile. To me, remembering the Collector's words '... with his body greased ... slip through a space . . . if you woke up at the wrong time . . .' those four hundred yards might have been four miles. The rooms were littered with officers' kit; there was liquor in the dining-room; not a treasure-house, perhaps, but an attractive haul for a naked outlaw. Worst of all, I was the man with the money, the man who had been seen paying out substantial sums of money to local merchants. Only that morning I'd counted out many rupees into the hand of Duba Singh outside his open-fronted shop, with half the population of the market-place clustered at my heels. Actually, the money was safe enough in the guardroom, but a dacoit wasn't to know that.

I made an unhappy tour of inspection, cursing myself for not arranging a guard; but who would think of a guard for a bungalow where three officers and a servant slept? Suppose I buzzed Jock on the field-telephone got him to give a look-in on his rounds of the guards-or get the mobile picket to come down the road once or twice during the night. Then I imagined Jock grinning dourly at the sergeant: 'Mr B. thinks he's got burglars. Maybe we'd better send a man down to look under his bed.' So I didn't buzz. I thought of shifting the phone to my bedroom from the dining-room; but there were only a couple of feet of spare cable, so the phone remained where it was.

There were six windows, and none of the shutters, with the wood warped by age and heat, would fasten properly. Even jammed as close as possible, there was still a space leftwell, you wouldn't imagine a child could get through. I locked the front-door, though one push would burst the flimsy lock; but at least there would be a noise. The kitchen-door was held closed by a thin piece of wood through a rusty hasp; there wouldn't be much warning if that was broken off. Then, for a silent half-hour, I sat sipping whisky and watching the lizards catching insects on the wall.

By ten-thirty, wearing shorts and sandals instead of the usual thin blanket which covered my nakedness, I was lying on the bed listening to the first drops of rain hitting the roof. The mosquito-net was up—I didn't

fancy being closeted, unable to see or move, in that horribly-empty room—and the lamp was out. Somehow, I felt that the darkness would give me more chance if they came—at least I wouldn't be an easy target for a thrown knife. My revolver, with the safety-catch on, lay under my right hand, against my thigh. I heard the fat raindrops drumming overhead and the distant howling of jackals, and hoped that there were only four-legged jackals abroad There would be no sleep that night. 'Naked, with his body greased...'

IN spite of all, I must have slept. It was two-thirty by my wrist-watch when I awoke, wakened, as the rain stopped, by the half-silence—the queer whispering drip of water on the roof and in the tamarind trees. Quietly I rose and padded over to the window. There was no moon, but the stars were trong.

Damn my imagination! I could swear that the trunk of one of those trees seemed thicker than—and then I stopped breathing, as though I'd received a sudden blow in the solar plexus. Quite distinctly a shadow had moved away from the trunk and back again. I shivered in the warm night. This wasn't imagination. I knew there was a man crouching under that tree, watching the bungalow.

Feeling the chill on my body, I slipped off the safety-catch, turned and left the room, and went quickly across to the rear bedroom. I looked again between the warped shutters.

This time there was no doubt. This fellow, a tall, turbaned figure in some kind of dark cloak or blanket, stood between the circle of trees and the back of the kitchen. And, even as I looked, he moved forward, soundlessly, and within a second was out of view, cut off by the angle of the wall. He was heading straight for that flimsily-secured door. I admit, without shame, that my body was paralysed by sheer panic-fear. I had seen two—there might be a dozen, or twenty. Some might be in the house now—even in the bedroom I had just left, or in the passage where the starlight didn't reach. I shivered again.

A dash for the phone? How long would it take a sleepy operator to answer, to understand and rouse the guard—while I risked a knife in the back? Out through the window and a sprint through the trees? How many knives waited in those shadows? A warning shot? It might scare them off—or it might

only give my position away to a dozen desperate cut-throats willing to risk a rush against a single revolver.

I backed into the darkest corner of the room and crouched, the revolver resting across my knee and pointed at the grey blankness of the doorway. My breathing seemed to make a great noise in the empty darkness. Never before had I known fear so intimately. The water still rustled on the roof, and the air was cool on my sweating body. My calves and knees began to ache intolerably. It was twenty minutes to three. I waited. I sat there for another two hours—until a light stronger than starlight began to filter through the shutters.

I waited until it was fully light. It was almost impossible to straighten my cramped legs; it was several minutes before I could walk without staggering in agony. Then I went outside, into the blessed sunlight. The wet earth showed tracks, some superimposed on others, among the trees; some led up to the kitchen-door, some went to every window in the building. But nothing had been touched. I went inside and slept.

I said nothing to Jock at breakfast; but I decided that a guard should be arranged for that night, when it would be his turn to sleep alone in that lonely bungalow. Before we had finished our coffee, however, the signal came through for us to leave J—n. By ten o'clock we were ready to go.

I STOOD by my truck with a garland round my neck, while Jock bent sheepishly to receive a similar flowery necklace from a small girl. Ribald comments flowed from the trucks, and the merchants stood in a grinning circle.

'Well, it's been a quiet visit, after all,' I said to the Collector.

'Yes.' He smiled slowly and prodded the ground with his stick. 'By the way, have you any idea how much you've paid out for meat and fruit and so on in the last two weeks?'

'Not exactly,' I answered, puzzled, 'but I should think-

'A pretty tidy amount, anyhow. Quite apart from what your lads have bought for themselves in the bazaar, of course. Oh, yes—it's awfully good for trade having a company of troops in the town. Awfully good! Why, I should think old Duba Singh there must have sold more in a week or so than he normally does in a year.' The smile broadened

suddenly, and the stick prodded more energetically. 'I told you they were quite quiet people, really. Y'know'—the smile was now very broad indeed—'I found out later that not one of those stones actually hit the crossing-keeper. Not one.'

It took a second or two for me to tumble to it. I looked across at the smiling merchants, at the satisfied grin on the wrinkled brown face of Duba Singh—and a warm glow, not caused by the Indian sun, crept over my face and neck. For a moment I was speechiess.

'Well,' I gasped at last, 'next time they feel like having a trade boom, you might ask them not to pinch railway-lines.'

I climbed aboard. As the truck moved the Collector came close to the side. 'By the way,' he said, 'old Duba Singh thinks a lot of you—thinks you're a great fellow and very generous. Do y'know, last night, when he heard you were sleeping in the dak bungalow alone, he sent his three sons to patrol the garden from sunset to sunrise—just in case you were disturbed.'

A Philosophy

Never, never, close the door. Never slam the prison gate. Shut in, shut out, the final state Is the same. Never shield the sacred flame From the hungry and the cold. Let the treasury of gold Open lie. Greet the unknown passer-by Through a window wide and clean With no curtain in between Mind and mind. Let the stranger always find A hospitable resting-place, Let him linger there a space Without fee. Where the lodging is not free, Where the thief can nothing take, And the gambler casts no stake, None can win. Let the hostage-taker in, Dare to laugh at present joy, Nothing ever can destroy What has never been. Sunrise you have never seen Cannot tear you with regret That the sun should ever set Like a stone. Safe is he, and he alone, Circled by a prison wall, Never looking out at all, Who never lives, for fear of dying, Never has, for fear of losing, And, the jealous fates defying, Keeps on saying 'No', refusing All the gifts that God has given,-Earth, and Hell, and even Heaven, Sleeping sound, for evermore.

DAPHNE MORLEY-FLETCHER.

Science at Your Service

AN EXPANDER TOOL

NEW expander tool provides a simple and speedy method for joining standard copper tubing. Apart from industrial uses, it is of value to the domestic plumber. The expander tool has two continuous sections at one end. The first of these is a pilot section, and this fits into the standard copper tubing for which it is designed. The other end of the expander tool is then hammered until the next and thicker section has entered the tube, thus expanding the tubing by a precise amount. Another section of the same-sized tubing can then be inserted into the widened end. Before this is done, the ends to be joined should be cleaned and tinned, unless flux-solder was originally used on the expander-tool before inserting Heating with a blowlamp then gives an inconspicuous joint, thicker than the tubing itself only by the extra thickness of the tubing.

It is claimed that much wastage of material is eliminated if this method of pipe-joining is adopted. The tools are long-lasting, and sold in kits of five, each tool being designed for joining a specific size of standard copper tubing. For use in building, it is claimed that the cost of one set is recovered through the saving of materials and time in making the joints required for copper-piped services in one normal-sized house.

SEVEN

An interesting speculation about the number seven has emerged from recent psychological research at Harvard University. Seven has long been regarded as a somewhat mystic and perhaps sacred number. Biblical stories are frequently associated with seven things or events-Elijah had seven searches made for rain, Pharaoh saw seven kine and seven ears of corn, and it was seven priests with seven trumpets who marched round Jericho. Nor is the Bible alone insistent upon the importance of seven. The division of time into seven days per week is an arbitrary but ancient example. There are supposedly seven ages of man, seven graces, seven deadly sins, seven notes on the musical scale. The popular

list of Wonders of the World is limited to seven, and Seven Seas are given major recognition.

The modern sidelight on this habit of thought and classification has arisen from research on man's average memory-power. It was found that most people could distinguish between up to seven different intensities of light or sound. With more than seven differences to detect, judgment became much more confused. Similarly, after a short sight of a number of objects or a list of names to remember, most people could remember accurately if the number did not exceed seven. Above seven, errors sharply increased. There is some evidence, therefore, that the limit of simple memory capacity for most people is associated with sevens. If this is true, it is likely to have been much more pronounced in earlier ages of mankind when a massive majority of people could not enjoy the mental training of formal education. This modern speculation on the significance of seven may be a little fanciful, but it seems well worth discussing for sheer curiosity.

A DISH-MOP

The ever-increasing variety of modern materials is being reflected in new versions of quite old types of household tools. Exhibited recently in London, a handled dish-mop with cubes of coloured foam-plastic in the place of a bristled-mop attracted attention by sheer novelty of appearance. The cubes, about the size of a sugar-cube, are arranged en masse at the end of a flexible wire-spiral stem, and the total size of the mop-head is about that of a large-sized lemon. As a surface-cleaning tool this fabricated collection of foam-plastic cubes is effective and non-scratching; its porosity enables it to hold soapy water or detergent solution and also enables the dirty water to be squeezed out after use. The handle is wooden and carries a wire loop for hanging. Actual testing has shown this new domestic tool to be as efficient as it is striking in appearance. The foam-plastic is easily cleaned of wastes, grease, etc., by very hot water.

The technical term 'thixotropic' will mean little to the ordinary paint-user, but there is at present considerable discussion in the paint industry about the introduction of thixotropic paint. It is a paint that has the physical properties of a jelly when it is kept still, yet has the usual liquid properties of paint when agitated. As a result, tins of this paint may be knocked over or held upside down when open without spilling. Also, when on the brush, surplus paint will not run down the handle. The use of a brush is sufficiently agitative to degel the amount of paint being worked. But if blobs of paint are put on the surface being painted, these will not runthey will stay as blobs until they are worked by subsequent brushing. This remarkable combination of properties would be of little more than curiosity value if the transformation from one condition to the other was irreversible. But when agitation is no longer being applied, the jelly-like condition is quickly reacquired. For shops that sell paint for domestic use this new type of paint seems particularly attractive, for the paint cannot settle whilst held in stock; the need to upturn tins in stock at intervals is eliminated. In use, no stirring or addition of thinners is required. Drying with a high-gloss finish takes 5 to 74 hours. About 550 square feet can be covered with 1 gallon. The new paint is available in tins of from 1-pint to 1-gallon size, and in twelve colours, including black and white. As a type of paint used mainly by do-it-yourself home decorators, thixotropic paints have already been very successful in the United States.

BETTER SAFETY-RAZOR BLADES

A British company, long noted for manufacturing high-quality knives and other bladed items, has announced a new safety-razor blade, which it is producing by a secret process. The blades, said to fit all types of double-edged safety-razors, are guaranteed to be entirely rust-proof; they will not need drying or removal from the blade-holder. All that has been said about the process is that the steel is tempered under 'frozen heat' and that this part of the process gives the steel a perfect grain structure. The blades will initially be sold in packets of five. They are a little dearer than some well-known blades on the market, but the claim that they last longer may offset this.

BINDING BOOKS AT HOME

There will be little denying that paperbound editions of books are one of the most dominant factors in to-day's bookselling and to-day's reading. The pre-war advent of one very famous range of cheap paper-bound pocket-sized editions was in its own time a publishing revolution. It has been imitated since the war by several similar ventures, and most of them are abundantly evident on bookstalls. The absence of a more durable binding is not the only reason why these editions can be offered at lower prices than bound books-their price enables them to be aimed at a large market and the number of copies printed for a paper-bound edition is huge enough to reduce basic costs to a minute figure per copy. However, were these editions given a stouter pair of covers their price per copy would rise sharply and their sales would fall. So the enthusiastic reader of to-day has to make a choice of three means to the end of reading a particular book-namely, to buy it at its published price when it first appears, to wait until it is his or her turn to borrow it from a private or public library, or to wait even longer until it appears, as it may well do if it is a popular book, in a cheap paper-bound edition. But there is undoubtedly a certain pleasure in book-ownership: to possess a book whose first reading has given much enjoyment is to know that in a few years some of the pleasure can be re-experienced. These paper editions, whilst bringing book-ownership within the reach of the most moderate pockets, fail to give the fullest satisfaction of ownership. The thin outer covers quickly get dog-eared or At one time the publishers of one range of these books sold cloth covers into which the editions could be slipped; whether these are still sold to-day is not known. However, this device was protective, and it did not make any contribution towards another pride of book-ownership, the array of books in shelves, for these detachable cloth covers carried no titles.

The problem of giving paper editions more durable, shelf-suitable bindings has been considerably studied. For some time a simple and economic method for home-binding them has been known, but the problem of giving the books their titles on the spine remained obdurate. Now that a solution has been found for this, a most commendable do-it-yourself kit for binding paper editions has been placed on the British market. Each kit

contains the necessary materials for binding six paper editions, and the cost per book works out at approximately half the price of the paper editions themselves. It may be questioned whether the average reader will wish to give each paper edition he or she buys a more durable binding, but the desire may be quite strong for particular books which have been specially enjoyed. Some of the publishers issue classics, biographies, and various kinds of serious work in the paperbound format; in many cases these editions, cheap enough to buy, merit the extra cost of home-binding.

No special skill is needed to bind one of these books. First the original paper cover is gently torn away. The kit contains six pairs of stiff covers in a variety of colours; a suitable pair is selected. The kit also contains six backing-pieces. By following the simplest of diagrammatic instructions, and through the effective use of pressure-sensitive adhesives, the paper edition is speedily rehoused between firm covers. The attachment of the covers to the spine of the paper edition is finally made by adhesive supplied in a tube: the build-up of the two covers and the backingpiece to a suitable width to take the edition is mainly achieved through the presence of preapplied adhesives on the cover edges.

As has been said, a method for hometitling the new covers was difficult to devise. A special type of gold leaf strip made in America finally provided the solution, and this is now made in England. All that the homebinder has to do is to place the strip of goldleaf in the kit over the spine of the book and write on it with a pencil or ball-point pen. This impresses the necessary title words durably upon the spine of the book.

It has been necessary to describe this new product and home-process at unusual length, but it may well be of considerable interest and benefit to booklovers of moderate means. It is not suggested that these home-bindings equal the bindings of 10s. 6d. or 12s. 6d. editions, but they are strong and quite attractive. The kit for binding six books costs about the prewar price of a cloth-bound first edition novel.

NEW RANGE OF BOILERS

A new range of coke- or oil-burning boilers designed on modern Continental principles has recently become available here. Some of the outstanding features can be mentioned. The boilers will give both central heating and hot water from the same unit and are usually found to be very much cheaper than separate boiler and separate indirect cylinder with connecting pipe work, insulation etc. There is a built-in regulator that co-ordinates combustion with the temperature of the radiators and the hot water, and this regulator can be set to give any desired amount of heat, either more hot water or more central heating. There are six models covering outputs of 38,000 to 119,000 B.Th.U. per hour plus hot water supply. Oilburning equipment to replace coke-firing is available for these models in fully automatic form, and is also available to cover the whole range from 40,000 to 3,000,000 B.Th.U.: it can be supplied for either light or heavy oil.

MOTORISTS' GLOVES

A firm that has already acquired a good name for its handmade quality gloves has recently introduced a glove specially designed for car-driving. On each palm of the gloves the surface is bonded with numerous closelyplaced pads, each of which is comprised of a number of tiny grippers. The effect of these surface additions is to give a completely slipproof texture, so that even with the lightest pressure the wheel is firmly engaged. Steering is effortless, and it is claimed that the normal expenditure of muscular energy in gripping the wheel during, say, a day's driving is greatly reduced. The special gripping surface is firmly attached to the normal fabric of the glove by double-bonding, and will not become detached by wear or washing. These non-slip gloves are available in various colours and qualities, with or without cuffs. The standard weight model is made of heavyduty yarn, and there are an extra-heavy model lined with wool for winter wear and a summer model made with special lightweight yarn. These gloves are also proving serviceable for cold-weather golfing.

in order to facilitate reference.

To Correspondents who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, Chambers's Journal, II Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the Journal and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given

Weeds

A WEED, of course, is a plant growing where it shouldn't. There may be a lovely cabbage growing in the rose-border, so there it is a weed. You could have a glorious lily wanting to flower in a row of carrots, but, once again, there it would be a weed. I had a man who used to eat chickweed in sandwiches. He said it was better than mustard and cress. He never thought of it as a weed—he cultivated it. Likewise, canaries, of course, don't consider groundsel a weed. They like to eat it as a food. However, I think we are all quite agreed as to what are the weeds in our garden, and we do want to control them.

The best thing to do in the flower garden is to cover the ground with sedge-peat to the depth of an inch or so, with the result that the annual weeds cannot grow. This sedge-peat top-dressing makes it unnecessary to hoe right the way through the summer, or even to fork the border in the winter. It is a tremendous saving of labour, as well as being

a weed eliminator.

Among the soft fruits, the gooseberries, raspberries, redcurrants and blackcurrants, straw is used as a weed smotherer. Here it is applied to the depth of about a foot. Any old straw will do, the older the better. It can be put on at almost any time. To make certain that the bushes don't suffer from lack of nitrogen, fish-manure must be applied at the rate of 3 ounces to the square yard in April and again in September. Once again, the straw makes it unnecessary to do any cultivations at all. If, on the other hand, the ground is infested with perennial weeds, something must be done about this first. because some of the weeds, like bindweed and thistles, can and will poke their noses up through the straw. These can be got rid of by the use of a strong hormone solution, such as Verdone. In the case where it is impossible to spray the weeds, the leaves can be painted.

Verdone can also be used on lawns, and it is possible by fairly frequent applications to have a lawn which really is composed of fine grasses. This product, as will be known, contains methoxone. It leads to the distortion of the weeds first and eventually to death. It

is best to apply the selective weedkiller in the spring or summer when the weeds are growing vigorously, but lawns should never be cut three days before or three days after treatment. If heavy rain falls shortly after an application, it is advisable to repeat the dose. For weeds like plantains and creeping buttercup only one treatment will be necessary, for weeds like daisies and dandelions two treatments should be used; while for clover, yarrow, and pearl-wort three treatments are necessary at intervals of about a fortnight.

Normally one uses about a tablespoonful to two gallons of water and applies the liquid through a fine rose. The two gallons can be effectively used over an area of 16 square yards. The substance may be applied in orchards and shrubberies, but the idea, needless to say, is to see that the liquid only goes on to weeds and not on to the leaves of the cultivated plants. One must be careful, therefore, not to allow drift to take place on a windy day. Be very very careful of using Verdone near tomatoes, and never apply it

during a severe drought.

Sodium chlorate also gives excellent results in controlling weeds. The writer always prefers to use it as a dry powder and to apply it so that it lands on the leaves of the weeds, where it is soon absorbed and is passed on to the roots. It is best to apply it on a sunny day and when the weeds are in active growth. It is better to leave the land alone for three months, for though it may be said that sodium chlorate destroys slowly, it could equally well be said that it destroys surely. A lot has been talked about it being dangerous, but this is only when it is made into a liquid and when clothing or wood becomes saturated with the solution. It is possible to eradicate weeds growing under trees and bushes without affecting the latter at all. It is one of the best cures for nettles and is first-class when used on palms.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

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CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY CROSSWORD No. 22

14

ACROSS

- 5 Entangle she-men (6).
- 8 State theatrically known (8).
- 9 Chemical showing Hindu goddess (6).
- 10 She was skilled at pulling the long bow (8).
- 11 Gather burner—he had papers (8).
- 12 Where the fruit is uncovered (4).
 14 If a spelling one, mind
- 14 If a spelling one, mind you don't get stung (3).15 Book—for the shelf? (6).
- 16 Divide the answer (8).
- 16 Divide the answer (8). 19 Short cut to prosecution?
- 23 Miss Bell's carriage (6).
- 26 Scrape—at Plymouth?
- 27 Reptiles as afterthought (4).
- 28 Normal route (two words: 5.3). 29 Tear the network value
- 31 Mostly rodents interfere
- 32 Source from which discouragement may come
- (two words: 4.4).
 33 Possible description of puzzle (6).

DOWN

- 1 Wooden pin with burlesque start (7).
- 2 What else was Wendy Moira Angels? (7).
- 3 Blow it! (4).
- 4 Are monkeys able to make these dainties? (7).
- 5 Head after a hundred and one following backward title, to set free (10).

20

- 6 As the Forces might do (two words: 4.3).
- 7 Importune-like a lawyer? (7).
- 12 Remove quietly (4).
- 13 Tool which sounds as though it 17 down (4).
- 14 Used to control wages, but not by hairdressers (10).

Composed by Joan Benyon

11

16

26

29

32

- DOWN (contd.) 17 See 13 down
- 18 Poetically described is immemorial (4).
- 20 Give back, repose before metal (7).
- 21 Last words in streets, but found in flowers (7).
- 22 Retiring fastener, perhaps : he's from Venice (7).

18

25

27

- 24 Ran back with speed-to tell (7).
- 25 One could hardly expect to read one's own (7).
- 30 Number last month, for a fad (4).

Three prizes of book tokens to the value of ten shillings and sixpence each will be swarded to the senders of the first correct solutions opened.

Entries must arrive not later than the 15th May.

Envelopes should be clearly marked CROSSWORD in the top left-hand corner. The closing date unavoidably confines the entry to those resident in Great Britain, N. Ireland and Eire.

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